THE ADVENT

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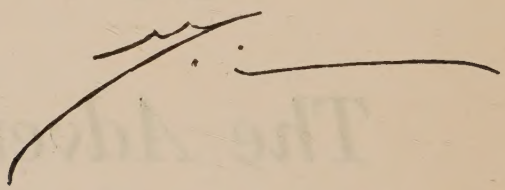
The Advent

Whatever comes to you, if you take it in the right spirit, will turn for the best.



The ADVENT

August 1951

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He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
And cast away the yoke of Matter's law.
The body's rules bound not the spirit's powers:
When life had stopped its beats, death broke not in;
He dared to live when breath and thought were still.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, BOOK I, CANTO V)

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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

THE END OF A CIVILISATION*

THE world has been going down in its course of degradation with an increased momentum since the very beginning of the present century. One of the great symptoms of the decline is the prevalence of wars. It can be said in fact that there has been no real peace or even truce upon earth since the century opened with the Russo-Japanese War. Wars have continued since then uninterruptedly: some part or other of the world has always been involved. Indeed one can say it has been a single war carried on on many fronts, opening out at different times. Another noticeable thing about these wars is their nature; with the lapse of time they have become more and more extensive and more and more devastating. It is no longer now simply a clash of armies or professionals, of that section of society whose business it is to fight. Whole nations—literally the whole of a people including men, women, children of all ages—are now mobilised, have to take part in the fight and share the same danger.

* Based on The Mother's talk

Naturally, war meant always killing; but the nature of killing has changed and even the motive too. Killing is now attended with cruelty, done with methods terribly atrocious and revoltingly ingenious. And this has affected the very consciousness and morale of man. Not only there is no decency or decorum, not to speak of magnanimity and nobility of attitude and behaviour —once familiar things in stories of the Kshattriya, the Samurai, the Knights of old—there has come into the field a phenomenon for which it has itself found a name, *sadism* wanton violence and on a mass scale. Man seems to have thrown off all mask, all the rules of civilised social life and has become worse than the animal: he is now the Pisacha, the ghoul and the demon. He seems to have reached the bottom of the pit.

We know of worlds—vital worlds—which are made of the most unimaginable horror and ugliness and devilry. Many have contacted such domains either consciously in the course of their yogic experiences or unconsciously in nightmare. They bear testimony to the stark monstrosity of these worlds —the gloom, the fear, the pain and torture, the doom and damnation that reign there. That entire inner world seems to have precipitated itself upon earth and taken a body here. A radiant poet spoke of Paradise being transplanted upon earth in the shape of a happy city (the city of the Raghus): today we have done the opposite miracle, the devil's capital city is installed upon earth, or even something worse. For, in the subtler worlds there is a saving grace, after all. If you have within you somewhere an aspiration, a trust, a faith, a light, the enemy cannot touch you or maul you badly. You may have also around you there beings who help you, a teacher, a guide who is near visibly or invisibly to give you the necessary warning or protection. But here below when the enemy has clothed himself in a material form and armed himself with material weapons, you are almost helpless. To save yourself from a physical blow, it is not always enough to have the proper inner consciousness only. Something more is needed.

Therefore misery stalks large upon the earth. Nothing comparable to it, either in quality or quantity, can history offer as an example. Man finds no remedy for his ills, he does not dare to hope for any. He feels he is being irretrievably drawn into the arms of the Arch-enemy.

Perhaps it was necessary that it should be so. A *pralaya*, a Deluge has to be there to end an epoch and begin a new one. Indeed the civilisation that man has built up for millenniums, that has reached its culmination in modern *scientism*, whatever gifts it might have brought to him, however great and powerful and beautiful it might have been at its best in its own sphere,

still it had and was a limitation, acted as a deterrent to a further leap and progress of the consciousness. It is the humanistic cycle that has reigned, from the ancient Greek down to modern America. Is it not time that another consciousness should intervene, other gods make their appearance?

*
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And yet if the civilisation really goes, it will not be a small thing, even when measured on the cosmic scale. A civilisation is to be judged and valued not at its nadir, but at its zenith, in its total effect and not by a temporary phase in its course. Civilisation really means preparation of the instrument: the human instrument that is to express the Divine. The purpose of creation, we have often said, is the establishment of the highest spiritual consciousness in the embodied life on earth. The embodied life means man's body and life and mind; individually and socially these constitute the instrument through which the higher light is to manifest itself. The instrument has to be prepared, made ready for the purpose. Actually it is obscure, ignorant, narrow, weak; at the outset and for a long time it expresses only or mainly the inferior animal nature. Civilisation is an attempt to raise this inferior nature, to refine, enlarge, heighten it, to cultivate and increase its potentialities and capacities. The present civilisation, we have said, is a growth of thousands of years—at least five thousand years according to the most modest archeological computation. In this period man has developed his brain, his rational intelligence, has unravelled some of the great mysteries of nature; he has controlled and organised life to an extent that has opened new possibilities of growth and achievement; even with respect to the body he has learnt to treat it with greater skill and endowed it with finer and more potent efficiencies. There have been aberrations and misuses, no doubt; but the essence of things achieved still remains and is always an invaluable asset: that must not be allowed to go.

If the civilisation goes, it means the instrument is gone, the basis on which the edifice for the Divine Consciousness is to be built is removed, nothing remains to stand firmly on. So the labour has to start again: one must begin from the beginning. The work has to be done and will be done, it cannot be allowed to terminate into a labour of Sisyphus.

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Look at the individual. Why is there in it the life-urge to persist, to endure, to survive? If life had no other meaning than mere living, then the best thing would have been to drop the body as soon as it is badly damaged or incapacitated, through illness, accident or old age. Instead, why this attempt to prolong it, to refuse to accept the present difficulties and disadvantages? The reason is that life requires time to grow in consciousness, to acquire experiences, to assimilate and utilise them so as to transform them into powers of being, time, that is to say, to build and forge the instrument so that it may house the higher consciousness and existence. In the present make-up, the body, at a certain stage has to be given up; for the frame becomes too rigid and stiff to keep pace with the growing and fast moving inner consciousness. The thread is taken up again in another life; but there is always a considerable reduplication in this *natural* process, one has to repeat the stage of babyhood and immaturity, a retempering of the instrument till it is capable of newer uses. True, something of the experiences, their essence, is stored somewhere in the depth of the being; but it is not utilised fully, it is not an effective element in the normal consciousness. And although one always bases oneself upon one's past, the edifice constructed seems new every time. Yoga in the individual seeks to eliminate this element of repetition and unconsciousness and delay in the process of growth and evolution: its aim is to complete the cycle of individual growth in a single life.

Now the same principle can be extended to the wider collective development. Civilisation has reached a status today when the next higher status can be and must be attempted. Man has risen to a considerable height in the mental sphere; the time and occasion are now here to step beyond into the supramental, the dynamically spiritual. Dangers are ahead, even around and close: all the forces of the infra-human, the submerged urges of animal atavism are pushing and pulling man down to a regression, to a reversion *to type*. The choice is indeed crucial. If the civilisation is to perish, it means mankind has to start over again its life course, begin, that is to say, at the baby stage, once more to go through the slow process of centuries to acquire the mastery that was attained in the physical, the vital and the mental domains. Already there have been such lost periods in man's evolution now submerged in his consciousness and their gains are being with difficulty recovered. But a landslide at this critical hour will be a colossal catastrophe—humanly speaking, some thing almost irremediable.

For here is the sense of the crisis. The *mantra* given for the new age is that man shall be transcended and in the process, man, as he is, shall go. Man shall go, but something of the vehicle that the present cycle has prepared will remain. For, that precisely has been the function of the passing civilisation, especially in its later stages, viz. to build up a terrestrial temple for the Lord. The aberration and deformation, rampant today, mean only an excess of stress upon this aspect, upon the external building which was ignored or not sufficiently considered in the earlier and higher curves of the present civilisation. The spiritual values have gone down, because the material values came to be regarded as valueless and this upset the economy or balance in Nature. It is true that we have gone far, too far in our *revanche*. And the problem that faces us today is this: whether mankind will be able to change sufficiently and grow into the higher being that shall inhabit the earth as its crown in the coming cycle or, being unable, will go totally, disappear altogether or be relegated to the backwater of earthly life, somewhat like the aboriginal tribes of today.

What is necessary at the beginning is to remember the Mother as much as possible, to concentrate on her in the heart for a time every day, if possible, thinking of her as the Divine Mother, to aspire to feel her there within you, offer her your works and pray that from within she may guide and sustain you...the mentality begins little by little to change and a new conciousness opens in the sadhaka which begins to be aware more and more of the Mother's presence within, of her working on the nature and in the life or of some other spiritual experience which opens the gate towards realisation.

SRI AUROBINDO

SONNETS

(1)

THE UNSEEN INFINITE

Arisen to voiceless unattainable peaks
I meet no end, for all is boundless He,
An absolute joy the wide-winged spirit seeks,
A Might, a Presence, an Eternity.

In the inconscient dreadful dumb Abyss
Are heard the heart-beats of the Infinite.
The insensible midnight veils His trance of bliss,
A fathomless sealed astonishment of Light.

In His ray that dazzles our vision everywhere,
Our half-closed eyes seek fragments of the One:
Only the eyes of Immortality dare
To look unblinded on that living Sun.

Yet are our souls the Immortal's selves within,
Comrades and powers and children of the Unseen.

1939 October

(2)

THE INNER SOVEREIGN

Now more and more the Epiphany within
    Affirms on Nature's soil His sovereign rights.
My mind has left its prison-camp of brain;
    It pours, a luminous sea from spirit heights.

A tranquil splendour, waits my Force of Life
    Couched in my heart, to do what He shall bid,
Poising wide wings like a great hippogriff
    On which the gods of the empyrean ride.

My senses change into gold gates of bliss;
    An ecstasy thrills through touch and sound and sight
Flooding the blind material sheath's dull case:
    My darkness answers to His call of light.

Nature in me one day like Him shall sit
Victorious, calm, immortal, infinite.

1939 September

(3)

THE BODY

This body which was once my universe,
    Is now a pittance carried by the soul,—
Its Titan's motion bears this scanty purse,
    Pacing through vastness to a vaster goal.

Too small was it to meet the giant need
    That only infinitude can satisfy:
He keeps it still, for in the folds is hid
    His secret passport to eternity.

In his front an endless Time and Space deploy
The landscape of their golden happenings;
His heart is filled with sweet and violent joy,
His mind is upon great and distant things.

How grown with all the world conterminous
Is the little dweller in this narrow house!

1939 October

(4)

Light, endless Light! darkness has room no more,
Life's ignorant gulfs give up their secrecy:
The huge inconscient depths unplumbed before
Lie glimmering in vast expectancy.

Light, timeless Light immutable and apart!
The holy sealed mysterious doors unclose.
Light, burning Light from the Infinite's diamond heart
Quivers in my heart where blooms the deathless rose.

Light in its rapture leaping through the nerves!
Light, brooding Light! each smitten passionate cell
In a mute blaze of ecstasy preserves
A living sense of the Imperishable.

I move in an ocean of stupendous Light
Joining my depths to His eternal height.

1939 October SRI AUROBINDO

DIRGHATAMAS' HYMN TO AGNI *

OFFER like a secure seat that womb to Agni the utterly bright who sits upon the altar and his abode is bliss; clothe with thought as with a robe the slayer of the darkness who is pure and charioted in light and pure bright (white) of hue.

(शुक्र=a white brightness).

2. The twiceborn Agni moves (intense) about his triple food; it is eaten and with the year it has grown again; with the tongue and mouth of the one (or with his tongue in the presence of the one) he is the strong master and enjoyer, with the other he engirdles and crushes in his embrace his delightful things.

मृश् is used of the sexual contact; वारणः from वृ to cover, surround.

3. He gives energy of movement to both his mothers on their dark path, in their common dwelling and both make their way through to their child (or following their child), for his tongue is lifted upward, he destroys and rushes swiftly through and should be chosen, increasing his father.

(Expl. Heaven and Earth, Mind and body dwelling together in one frame or in one material world move in the darkness of ignorance, they pass through it by following the divine Force which is born to their activities. कुपय is of doubtful significance. The father is the Purusha or else Heaven in the sense of the higher spiritual being.)

4. For the thinker becoming man his swift hastening impulsions dark and bright desire freedom; active, rapid, quivering, they are yoked to their works, swift steeds and driven forward by the Breath of things.

5. They for him destroy and speed lightly on (or speed and pervade) creating his dark being of thickness and his mighty form of light; when reaching forward he touches the Vast of Being, he pants towards it and, thundering, cries aloud.

(महीमवनि might mean the vast earth, but अवनी and even पृथिवी are not used in the Veda invariably, the former not usually, to mean earth, but stray or return to their original sense—सप्त अवनयः).

* *Rig Veda*, I. 140

6. He who when he would become in the tawny ones, bends down and goes to them bellowing as the male to its mates,—putting out his forces he gives joy to their bodies (or he makes blissful the forms of things) and like a fierce beast hard to seize he tosses his horns.

(बभ्रुषु the cows, अरुणयः of a later verse—knowledge in the mortal mind).

7. He whether contracted in being or wide-extended seizes on them utterly; he knowing, they knowing the eternal Agni enjoys (lies with) them, then again they increase and go to the state divine; uniting, another form they make for the Father and Mother.

8. Bright with their flowing tresses they take utter delight of him, they who were about to perish, stand upon high once more for his coming; (मन्नुषीः is uncertain. It may be dead or dying. रेभिरे=delight is here perfectly proved) for he loosens from them their decay and goes to them shouting high, he creates supreme force and unconquerable life.

9. Tearing about her the robe that conceals the Mother he moves on utterly to the Delight with the creatures of pure Being who manifest the Force; he establishes the wideness, he breaks through to the goal for this traveller, even though swift rushing, he cleaves always to the paths. (रिहन् रेरिहत् are uncertain.)

10. Burn bright for us, O Agni, in our fullnesses, henceforth be the strong master and inhabit in us with the sisters; casting away from thee those of them that are infant minds, thou shouldst burn bright encompassing us all about like a cuirass in our battles.

(श्वसि is the Greek *kasis* and an old variant of श्वसि —wife or sister. Therefore it is coupled with वृषा like पत्नी).

11. This, O Agni, is that which is well-established upon the ill-placed; even out of this blissful mentality may there be born to thee that greater bliss. By that which shines bright and pure from thy body, thou winnest for us the delight.

12. Thou givest us, O Agni, for chariot and for home a ship travelling with eternal progress of motion that shall carry our strong spirits and our spirits of fullness across the births and across the peace.

13. Mayest thou, O Agni, about our Word for thy pivot bring to light for us Heaven and Earth and the rivers that are self-revealed; may the Red Ones reach to knowledge and strength and long days of light, may they choose the force and the supreme good.

SRI AUROBINDO

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

(New Series-3)

A PROGRESSIVE evolution of the visible and invisible instruments of the Spirit is the whole law of the earth nature; that too is the fundamental value which underlies all the other values of its existence and its process and gives them their significance.

Spirit has concealed itself in inconscient matter. It evolves, for itself first of all and as if that were its only preoccupation, forms of matter by the working of matter forces. It is only when this has been sufficiently done, that it thinks of life.

And yet a subconscient life and its imprisoned forces were there all the time in matter and its forces and are there even in its most apparently inanimate forms...

Afterwards came an evolution of mind in many forms by the working of liberated mind-forces. In those life-forces in matter and even in the very substance of matter mind was latent. An evolution of mind in the living form by a working of liberated mind-forces was the third chapter of the story. The third chapter is not completed, neither will it be the end of the narrative.

Evolution—Notes

The evolution of the earth nature is not finished because it has manifested only three powers out of the seven-fold scale of consciousness that is involved in manifested Nature. It has brought out from its apparent inconscience only the three powers of Mind and Life and Matter.

Mind emerges out of life in matter; it is incapable of manifesting directly in the material form. It is there, but it acts mechanically in the somnam-

*From the unpublished writings of Sri Aurobindo

bulism of an original force of inconscience and inertia. This and no more is what we mean by the inconscience of Matter; for although consciousness is there, it is involved, inorganic, mechanical in its action; it supports the works of Force by its inherent presence, but not by its light of active intelligence. This is why material Nature does the works of a supreme and miraculous intelligence and yet there seems to be no intervention of any indwelling Seer or Thinker.

Ether and material space are different names for the same thing. Space, in its origin at least if not in its universal character, is an extension of the substance of consciousness in which motion of energy can take place for the relations of being with being or force with force and for the building up of symbolic forms on which this interchange can be supported. Ether is space supporting the works of material energy and the symbolic forms it creates; it is, speaking paradoxically but to the point, immaterial or essential matter.

Consciousness—Psychology

All that exists or can exist in this or any other universe can be rendered into terms of consciousness; there is nothing that cannot be known. This knowing need not be always a mental knowledge. For the greater part of existence is either above or below mind, and mind can know only indirectly what is above or what is below it. But the one true and complete way of knowing is by direct knowledge.

All can be rendered into terms of consciousness because all is either a creation of consciousness or else one of its forms. All exists in an infinite conscious existence and is a part or a form of it. In proportion as one can share directly or indirectly, completely or incompletely in the eternal awareness of this Infinite, or momentarily contact or enter into, or formulate some superior or inferior power of its consciousness or knowledge, one can know what it knows in part or whole, by a direct knowing or an indirect coming to knowledge. A conscious, half-conscious or subconscious participation in the awareness of the Infinite is the basis of all knowledge.

All things are inhabited by this consciousness, even the things that seem to us inconscient, and the consciousness in one form can communicate or contact with the consciousness in another or else penetrate or contain or identify with it. This in one form or another is the true process of all knowledge; the rest is ignorant appearance.

All things are one self; it is the one Knower who knows himself every where, from one centre or another in the multiplicity of his play. Otherwise no knowledge would be possible.

The sense of a greater or even of an ultimate Self need not be limited to a negative and empty wideness whose one character is to be without limitations or features. The first extreme push of our recoil from what we now are or think ourselves to be may and does often at first carry us over into this annihilating experience. A negation of our present error, a release from our petty irksome aching bonds may seem to be the only thing worth having, the only thing true. The rest is infinity, freedom, peace. We feel an Infinite that needs nothing but its own infinite to fill it. We rejoice in a freedom of which any form, name or description, any creative activity, any movement, any impulse would be a disturbing denial and the beginning of a relapse into the error of will and desire, the ignorance of the illusory finite. To accept nothing but the bare bliss of infinity is the condition of this peace. The mind escaping from itself denies all thought, all form-making, all motion or play of any kind; for that would be a grievous return to itself, a miserable imprisonment and renewed hard-labour. The life released from the toil of labouring and striving and living demands only immobility and no more to be, a sleep of force, the surety and rest of an immutable status. The body accepts denial and dissolution, for to be dissolved is to cease to breathe and suffer. A bodiless, lifeless, mindless infinite breadth and supreme silence shows to us that we are in contact with the Absolute....

All existence,—as the mind and sense know existence,—is manifestation of an Eternal and Infinite which is to the mind and sense unknowable but not unknowable to its own self-awareness.

Whatever the manifestation may be, spiritual or material or other, it has behind it something that is beyond itself, and even if we reached the highest possible heights of the manifested existence there would be still beyond that even an Unmanifested from which it came.

The Unmanifested Supreme is beyond all definition and description by mind or speech; no definition the mind can make, affirmative or negative, which can be at all expressive of it or adequate.

To the mind this Unmanifest can present itself as a Self, a supreme Nihil (Tao or Sunyam), a featureless Absolute, an Indeterminate, a blissful Nirvana of manifested existence, a Non-Being out of which Being came or a Being of silence out of which a world-illusion came. But all these are mental

formulas expressing the mind's approach to it, not That but impressions which fall from That upon the receiving consciousness, not the true essence or nature (swarupa) of the Eternal and Infinite. Even the words Eternal and Infinite are only symbolic expressions through which the mind feels without grasping some vague impression of this Supreme.

If we say of it *neti neti*, this can mean nothing except that nothing in the world or beyond it of which the mind can take cognisance is the Supreme in its entirety or its essence. If we say of it *iti iti*, this can mean at the most that what we see of it in the world or beyond is some indication of something that is there beyond and by travelling through all these indications to their absolutes we may get a step or two nearer to the Absolute of all absolutes, this Supreme. Both formulas have a truth in them, but neither touches the secret truth of the Supreme.

It is not true that physical work is of an inferior value to mental culture, it is the arrogance of the intellect that makes the claim. All work done for the Divine is equally divine; manual labour done for the Divine is more divine than mental culture done for one's own development, fame or mental satisfaction.

If there is temporary physical inability, one can take rest, but solely for the purpose of recovering the physical energy. The idea of giving up physical work for mental self-development is a creation of the mental ego.

Sri Aurobindo

ON THE MAHABHARATA*

IT was hinted in a recent article of the Indian Review, an unusually able and searching paper on the date of the Mahabharata war, that a society is about to be formed for discovering the genuine and original portions of our great epic. This is glad tidings to all admirers of Sanscrit literature and to all lovers of their country. For the solution of the Mahabharata problem is essential to many things, to any history worth having of Aryan civilisation and literature, to a proper appreciation of Vyasa's poetical genius and, far more important than either, to a definite understanding of the great ethical gospel which Sri Krishna came down on earth to teach as a guide to mankind in the dark Kali Yuga then approaching. But I fear that if the inquiry is to be pursued on the lines the writer of this article seemed to hint, if the Society is to rake out 8000 lines from the War Parvas and dub the result the Mahabharata of Vyasa, then the last state of the problem will be worse than its first. It is only by a patient scrutiny and weighing of the whole poem, disinterestedly, candidly and without preconceived notions, a consideration canto by canto, paragraph by paragraph, couplet by couplet, that we can arrive at anything solid or permanent. But this implies a vast and heart-breaking labour. Certainly, labour however vast ought not to have any terrors for a scholar, still less for a Hindu scholar; yet, before one engages in it, one requires to be assured that the game is worth the candle. For that assurance there are three necessary requisites, the possession of certain sound and always applicable tests to detect later from earlier work, a reasonable chance that such tests if applied will restore the real epic roughly if not exactly in its original form and an assurance that the epic when recovered will repay from literary, historical or other points of view the labour that has been bestowed on it. I believe that these three requisites are present in this case and shall attempt to adduce a few reasons for my belief. I shall try to show that besides other internal evidence on which

*Old writing of Sri Aurobindo

I do not propose just now to enter, there are certain traits of poetical style, personality and thought which belong to the original work and are possessed by no other writer. I shall also try to show that these traits may be used as a safe guide through the huge morass of verse. In passing I shall have occasion to make clear certain claims the epic thus disengaged will possess to the highest literary, historical and practical value.

It is certainly not creditable to European scholarship that after so many decades of Sanscrit research, the problem of the Mahabharata which should really be the pivot for all the rest has remained practically untouched. For it is no exaggeration to say that European scholarship has shed no light whatever on the Mahabharata beyond the bare fact that it is the work of more than one hand. All else it has advanced and fortunately it has advanced little, has been rash, arbitrary or prejudiced; theories, theories and always theories without any honestly industrious consideration of the problem. The earliest method adopted was to argue from European analogies, a method pregnant of error and delusion. If we consider the hypothesis of a rude ballad-epic doctored by "those Brahmins"—anyone who is curious on the matter may study with both profit and amusement Fraser's History of Indian Literature—we shall perceive how this method has been worked. A fancy was started in Germany.....as a moral certainty.

But it is not from European scholars that we must expect a solution of the Mahabharata problem. They have no qualifications for the task except a power of indefatigable research and collocation; and in dealing with the Mahabharata even this power seems to have deserted them. It is from Hindu scholarship renovated and instructed by contact with European that the attempt must come. Indian scholars have shown a power of detachment and disinterestedness and a willingness to give up cherished notions under pressure of evidence which are not common in Europe. They are not, as a rule, prone to the Teutonic sin of forming a theory in accordance with their prejudices and then finding facts or manufacturing inferences to support it. When, therefore, they form a theory on their own account, it has usually some clear justification and sometimes an overwhelming array of facts and solid arguments behind it. The German scholarship possesses infinite capacity of acuteness, labour, marred by an impossible and fantastic imagination, the French of inference marred by insufficient command of facts, while in soundness of judgment Indian sane scholarship has both. It should stand first, for it must naturally move with a far greater familiarity and grasp in the sphere of Sanscrit studies than

any foreign mind however able and industrious. But above all it must clearly have one advantage, an intimate feeling of the language, a sensitiveness to shades of style and expression and an instinctive feeling of what is or is not possible, which the European cannot hope to possess unless he sacrifices his sense of racial superiority and lives in some great centre like Benares as a Pundit among Pundits. I admit that even among Indians this advantage must vary with the amount of education and natural fineness of taste; but where other things are equal, they must possess it in an immeasurably greater degree than an European of similar information and critical power. For to the European Sanscrit words are no more than dead counters which he can play with and throw as he likes into places the most unnatural or combinations the most monstrous; to the Hindu they are living things the very soul of whose temperament he understands and whose possibilities he can judge to a hair. That with these advantages Indian scholars have not been able to form themselves into a great and independent school of learning is due to two causes, the miserable scantiness of the mastery in Sanscrit provided by our universities, crippling to all but born scholars, and their lack of a sturdy independence which makes us over-ready to defer to European authority. These, however, are difficulties easily surmountable.

In solving the Mahabharata problem this intimate feeling for language is of primary importance; for style and poetical personality must be not indeed the only but the ultimate test of the genuineness of any given passage in the poem. If we rely upon any other internal evidence, we shall find ourselves irresistibly tempted to form a theory and square facts to it. The late Rai Bahadur Bankim Chandra Chatterji, a genius of whom modern India has not produced the parallel, was a man of ripe scholarship, literary powers of the very first order and a strong critical sagacity. In his Life of Krishna (Krishnacharitra) he deals incidentally with the Mahabharata problem, he perceived clearly enough that there were different recognizable styles in the poem and he divided it into three layers, the original epic by a very great poet, a redaction of the original epic by a poet not quite so great and a mass of additions by very inferior hands. But being concerned with the Mahabharata only so far as it covered the Life of Krishna, he did not follow up this line of scrutiny and relied rather on internal evidence of a quite different kind. He saw that in certain parts of the poem Krishna's godhead is either not presupposed at all or only slightly affirmed, while in others it is the main objective of the writer; certain parts again give us a

plain, unvarnished and straightforward biography and history, others are a mass of wonders and legends often irrelevant extravagances; in some parts also the conception of the chief characters is radically departed from and defaced. He therefore took these differences as his standard and accepted only those parts as genuine which gave a plain and consistent account of Krishna the man and of others in their relation to him. Though his conclusions are to a great extent justifiable, his *a priori* method led him to exaggerate them, to enforce them too rigidly without the proper flexibility and scrupulous hesitation and to resort occasionally to special pleading. His book is illuminating and full of insight, and the chief contentions will, I believe, stand permanently; but some parts of his argument are exaggerated and misleading and others, which are in the main correct, are yet insufficiently supported by reasoning. It is the failure to refer everything to the ultimate test of style that is responsible for these imperfections. Undoubtedly inconsistencies of detail and treatment are of immense importance. If we find gross inconsistencies of character, if a man is represented in one place as stainlessly just, unselfish and truthful and in another as a base and selfish liar or a brave man suddenly becomes guilty of incomprehensible cowardice, we are justified in supposing two hands at work; otherwise we must either adduce very strong poetic and psychological justification for the lapse or else suppose that the poet was incompetent to create or portray consistent and living characters. But if we find that one set of passages belongs to the distinct and unmistakable style of a poet who has shown himself capable of portraying great epic types, we shall be logically debarred from the saving clause. And if the other set of passages shows not only a separate style, but quite another spirit and the stamp of another personality, our assurance will be made doubly sure. Further, if there are serious inconsistencies of fact, if for instance Krishna says in one place that he can only do his best as a man and can use no divine power in human affairs, and in another foolishly uses his divine power where it is quite uncalled for, or if a considerable hero is killed three or four times over, yet always pops up again with really commendable vitality without warning or explanation until some considerate person gives him his *coup-de-grâce*, or if totally incompatible statements are made about the same person or the same event, we may find in either or all of these inconsistencies sufficient ground to assume diversity of authorship. Still even here we must ultimately refer to the style as corroborative evidence; and when the inconsistencies are grave enough to raise suspicion, but not so totally incompatible as to be conclusive, difference of style will at once

turn the suspicion into certainty, while similarity may induce us to suspend judgment. And where there is no inconsistency of fact or conception and yet the difference in expression and treatment is marked, the question of style and personality becomes all-important. Now in the Mahabharata we are struck at first by the presence of two glaringly distinct and incompatible styles. There is a mass of writing in which the verse and language is unusually bare, simple and great, full of firm and knotted thinking and a high and heroic personality, the imagination strong and pure, never florid or richly coloured, the ideas austere, original and noble. There is another body of work sometimes massed together but far oftener interspersed in the other, which has exactly opposite qualities, it is Ramayanistic, rushing in movement, full and even overabundant in diction, flowing but not strict in thought, the imagination bold and vast, but often garish and highly-coloured, the ideas ingenious and poetical, sometimes of astonishing subtlety, but at others common and trailing, the personality much more relaxed, much less heroic, noble and severe. When we look closer we find that the Ramayanistic part may possibly be separated into two parts, one of which has less inspiration and is more deeply imbued with the letter of the Ramayana, but less with its spirit. The first portion again has a certain element often in close contact with it which differs from it in a weaker inspiration, in being a body without the informing spirit of high poetry. It attempts to follow its manner and spirit but fails and reads therefore like imitation of a great poet. We have to ask ourselves whether this is the work of an imitator or of the original poet in his uninspired moments. Are there besides the mass of inferior or obviously interpolated work which can be easily swept aside, three distinct recognisable styles or four or only two? In the ultimate decision of this question inconsistencies of detail and treatment will be of great consequence. But in the meantime I find nothing to prevent me from considering the work of the first poet, undoubtedly the greatest of the four, if four there are, as the original epic.

It may indeed be objected that style is no safe test, for it is one which depends upon the personal preferences and ability of the critic. In an English literary periodical it was recently observed that a certain Oxford professor who had studied Stevenson like a classic attempted to apportion to Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne their respective work in the Wrecker, but his apportionment turned out to be hopelessly erroneous. To this the obvious answer is that the Wrecker is a prose work and not poetry. There was no prose style ever written that a skilful hand could not reproduce as

accurately as a practised forger reproduces a signature. But poetry, at any rate original poetry of the first class is a different matter. The personality and style of a true poet are unmistakable to a competent mind, for though imitation, echo, adaptation or parody is certainly possible, it would be as easy to reproduce the personal note in the style as for the painter to put into his portrait the living soul of its original. The successful discrimination between original and copy depends then upon the competence of the critic, his fineness of literary feeling, his sensitiveness to style. On such points the dictum of a foreign critic is seldom of any value. One would not ask a mere labourer to pronounce on the soundness of a great engineering work, but still less would one ask a mathematician unacquainted with mechanics. To minds well-equipped for the task there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in disengaging the style of a marked poetic personality from a mass of totally different work. The verdict of great art-critics on the genuineness of a professed Old Master may not be infallible, but if formed on a patient study of the technique and spirit of the work, it has at least considerable chances of being correct. But the technique and spirit of poetry are far less easy to catch by an imitator than those of great painting, the charm of words being more elusive and unanalysable than that of line and colour.

In unravelling the Mahabharata especially the peculiar inimitable nature of the style of Vyasa immensely lightens the difficulties of criticism. Had his been poetry of which the predominant grace was mannerism, it would have been imitable with some closeness; or even had it been a rich and salient style like Shakespeare's, Kalidasa's or Valmiki's, certain externals of it might have been reproduced by a skilled hand and the task of discernment rendered highly delicate and perilous. Yet even in such styles to the finest minds the presence or absence of an analysable personality within the manner of expression would be always perceptible. The second layer of the Mahabharata is distinctly Ramayanistic in style, yet it would be a gross criticism that could confuse it with Valmiki's own work; the difference as is always the case in imitations of great poetry, is as palpable as the similarity. Some familiar examples may be taken from English literature. Crude as is the composition and treatment of the three parts of King Henry VI, its style unformed and everywhere full of echoes, yet when we get such lines as

> Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just
> And he but naked though locked up in steel
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted,

we cannot but feel that we are listening to the same poetic voice as in Richard III

> Shadows tonight
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
> Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
> Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond,

or in Julius Caesar

> The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones,

or in the much later and richer vein of Antony and Cleopatra

> I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
> I here importune death awhile, until
> Of many thousand kisses the poor last
> I lay upon thy lips.

I have purposely selected passages of perfect simplicity and straightforwardness, because they appear to be the most imitable part of Shakespeare's work and are really the least imitable. Always one hears the same voice, the same personal note of style sounding through these very various passages, and one feels that there is in all the intimate and unmistakable personality of Shakespeare. We turn next and take two passages from Marlowe, a poet whose influence counted for much in the making of Shakespeare, one from Faustus

> Is this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium?

and another from Edward II

> I am that cedar, shake me not too much,
> And you the eagles; soar ye ne'er so high,
> I have the jesses that will pull you down
> And Aeque tandem shall that canker cry
> Unto the proudest peer in Brittany.

The choice of words, the texture of style has a certain similarity, the run of the sentences differs little if at all; but what fine literary sense does not feel that here is another poetical atmosphere and the ring of a different voice? And yet to put a precise name on the difference would not be easy. The personal difference becomes still more marked if we take a passage from Milton in which the nameable merits are precisely the same, a simplicity in strength of diction, thought and the run of the verse

What though the field be lost.

And when we pass farther down in the stream of literature and read

Thy thunder, conscious of the new command

we feel that the poet has nourished his genius on the greatness of Milton till his own soft and luxurious style rises into epic vigour; yet we feel too that the lines are only Miltonic, they are not Milton.

Now there are certain great poetical styles which are of a kind apart, they are so extraordinarily bare and restrained that the untutored mind often wonders what difficulty there can be in writing poetry like that; yet when the attempt is made, it is found that so far as manner goes it is easier to write somewhat like Shakespeare or Homer or Valmiki than to write like these. Just because the style is so bare, has no seizable mannerism, no striking and imitable peculiarities, the failure of the imitation appears complete and unsoftened; for in such poets there is but one thing to be caught, the unanalysable note, the personal greatness like everything that comes straight from God which it is impossible to locate or limit, and precisely the one that most eludes the grasp.

This poetry it is always possible to distinguish with some approach to certainty from imitative or spurious work. Very fortunately the style of Vyasa is exactly such a manner of poetry. Granted therefore *adhikāra* in the critic, that is to say, a natural gift of fine literary sensitiveness and the careful cultivation of that gift until it has become as sure a lactometer as the palate of the swan which rejects the water mingled with milk and takes the milk alone, we have in the peculiar characteristics of this poetry a test of unquestionable soundness and efficacy.

But there is another objection of yet more weight and requiring as full an answer. This method of argument from style seems after all as *à priori*

and Teutonic as any other; for there is no logical reason why the mass of writing in this peculiar style should be judged to be the original epic and not any of the three others or even part of that inferior work which was banished aside so contemptuously, the original Mahabharata need not have been a great poem at all; it was more probably an early, rude and uncouth performance. Certain considerations however may lead us to consider our choice less arbitrary than it seems. That the War Parvas contain much of the original epic may be conceded to Professor Weber; the war is the consummation of the story and without a war there could be no Mahabharata. But the war of the Mahabharata was not a petty contest between obscure barons or a brief episode in a much larger struggle or a romantic and chivalrous emprise for the rescue of a ravished or errant beauty. It was a great political catastrophe employing the clash of a hundred nations and far-reaching political consequences; the Hindus have always considered it as the turning-point in the history of their civilisation and the beginning of a new age, and it was long used as a historical standpoint and a date to reckon from in chronology. Such an event must have had the most considerable political causes and been caused by the collision of the most powerful personalities and the most important interests. If we find no record of or allusion to these in the poem, we shall be compelled to suppose that the poet living long after the event, regarded the war as a legend or romance which would form excellent matter for an epic and treated it accordingly. But if we find a simple and unvarnished, throughout necessarily connected and consecutive account of the political conditions which preceded the war and of the men who made it and their motives, we may safely say that this also is an essential part of the epic. The Iliad deals only with an episode of the legendery siege of Troy, it covers an action of about 8 days in a conflict lasting ten years; and its subject is not the Trojan War but the Wrath of Achilles. Homer was under no obligation therefore to deal with the political causes that led to hostilities, even supposing he lived then. The Mahabharata stands on an entirely different footing. The war there is related from beginning to end consecutively and without break, yet it is nowhere regarded as of importance sufficient to itself but depends for its interest on causes which led up to it and the characters and clashing interests it involved. The preceding events are therefore of essential importance to the epic. Without the war, no Mahabharata is true of the epic, but without the causes of the war, no war is equally true. And it must be remembered that the Hindu narrative poets

had no artistic predilections like that of the Greeks for beginning a story in the middle. On the contrary they always preferred to begin at the beginning.

SRI AUROBINDO

YOGA—Union with the Self, the Spirit or the Divine, One in all things; the process of an inner and higher consciousness within and above ourselves which makes this possible.

MAYA—The creative Power of Consciousness by which the world exists.

BHAKTA—One who approaches the Divine through the heart's devotion.

JNANI—One who approaches the Divine through spiritual knowledge.

ADESH—The inner Command.

MUKTI—Salvation; liberation from the Ignorance that holds all terrestrial beings.

RISHIS—Inspired seers, those who see the hidden Truth and hear its word.

AVATAR—One in whom the Divine Consciousness has descended into human birth for a great world-work.

SANATANA DHARMA—The eternal religion.

LILA—Existence regarded as a play of the Universal Spirit.

KALPA & MANVANTARA—Cycles of the universe; Kalpa—a cosmic aeon divided into Manvantaras or aeons of the earth.

BRAHMAN—The eternal Spirit, Origin and Pervasive Self of the universe.

THE DELIGHT OF THE DIVINE *

THIS then is the way of devotion and this its justification to the highest and the widest, the most integral knowledge, and we can now perceive what form and place it will take in an integral Yoga. Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being, whatever that may be, so far as we can conceive it in mind and realise it in spiritual activity. Whatever we see of this Divine and fix our concentrated effort upon it, that we can become or grow into some kind of unity with it or at the lowest into tune and harmony with it. The old Upanishad put it trenchantly in its highest terms, "Whoever envisages it as the Existence becomes that existence and whoever envisages it as the Non-existence, becomes that non-existence;" so too it is with all else that we see of the Divine,—that, we may say, is at once the essential and the pragmatic truth of the Godhead. It is something beyond us which is indeed already within us, but which we as yet are not or are only initially in our human existence; but whatever of it we see, we can create or reveal in our conscious nature and being and can grow into it, and so to create or reveal in ourselves individually the Godhead and grow into its universality and transcendence is our spiritual destiny. Or if this seem too high for the weakness of our nature, then at least to approach, reflect and be in secure communion with it is a near and possible consummation.

The aim of this synthetic or integral Yoga which we are considering, is union with the being, consciousness and delight of the Divine through every part of our human nature separately or simultaneously, but all in the long harmonised and unified, so that the whole may be transformed into a divine nature of being. Nothing less than this can satisfy the integral seer, because what he sees must be that which he strives to possess spiritually and, so far as may be, become. Not with the knower in him alone,

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part II. (The Yoga of Devotion), Chapter VI

nor with the will alone, nor with the heart alone, but with all these equally and also with the whole mental and vital being in him he aspires to the Godhead and labours to convert their nature into its divine equivalents. And since God meets us in many ways of his being and in all tempts us to him even while he seems to elude us,—and to see divine possibility and overcome its play of obstacles constitutes the whole mystery and greatness of human existence,—therefore in each of these ways at its highest or in the union of all, if we can find the key of their oneness, we shall aspire to track out and find and possess him. Since he withdraws into impersonality, we follow after his impersonal being and delight, but since he meets us also in our personality and through personal relations of the Divine with the human, that too we shall not deny ourselves; we shall admit both the play of the love and the delight and its ineffable union.

By knowledge we seek unity with the Divine in his conscious being: by works we seek also unity with the Divine in his conscious being, not statically, but dynamically, through conscious union with the divine Will; but by love we seek unity with him in all the delight of his being. For that reason the way of love, however narrow it may seem in some of its first movements, is in the end more imperatively all-embracing than any other motive of Yoga. The way of knowledge tends easily towards the impersonal and the absolute, may very soon become exclusive. It is true that it need not do so; since the conscious being of the Divine is universal and individual as well as transcendent and absolute, here too there may be and should be a tendency to integral realisation of unity and we can arrive by it at a spiritual oneness with God in man and God in the universe not less complete than any transcendent union. But still this is not quite imperative. For we may plead that there is a higher and a lower knowledge, a higher self-awareness and a lower self-awareness, and that here the apex of knowledge is to be pursued to the exclusion of the mass of knowledge, the way of exclusion preferred to the integral way. Or we may discover a theory of illusion to justify our rejection of all connection with our fellow-men and with the cosmic action. The way of works leads us to the Transcendent whose power of being manifests itself as a will in the world one in us and all, by identity with which we come, owing to the conditions of that identity, into union with him as the one self in all and as the universal self and Lord in the cosmos. And this might seem to impose a certain comprehensiveness in our realisation of the unity. But still this too is not quite imperative. For this motive also may lean towards an entire

impersonality and, even if it leads to a continued participation in the activities of the universal Godhead, may be entirely detached and passive in its principle. It is only when delight intervenes that the motive of integral union becomes quite imperative.

This delight which is so entirely imperative, is the delight in the Divine for his own sake and for nothing else, for no cause or gain whatever beyond itself. It does not seek God for anything that he can give us or for any particular quality in him, but simply and purely because he is our self and our whole being and our all. It embraces the delight of the transcendence, not for the sake of transcendence, but because he is the transcendent; the delight of the universal, not for the sake of universality, but because he is the universal; the delight of the individual not for the sake of individual satisfaction, but because he is the individual. It goes behind all distinctions and appearances and makes no calculations of more or less in his being, but embraces him wherever he is and therefore everywhere embraces him utterly in the seeming less as in the seeming more, in the apparent limitation as in the revelation of the illimitable; it has the intuition and the experience of his oneness and completeness everywhere. To seek after him for the sake of his absolute being alone is really to drive at our own individual gain, the gain of absolute peace. To possess him absolutely indeed is necessarily the aim of this delight in his being, but this comes when we possess him utterly and are utterly possessed by him and need be limited to no particular status or condition. To seek after him in some heaven of bliss is to seek him not for himself, but for the bliss of heaven; when we have all the true delight of his being, then heaven is within ourselves, and wherever he is and we are, there we have the joy of his kingdom. So too to seek him only in ourselves and for ourselves, is to limit both ourselves and our joy in him. The integral delight embraces him not only within our own individual being, but equally in all men and in all beings. And because in him we are one with all, it seeks him not only for ourselves, but for all our fellows. A perfect and complete delight in the Divine, perfect because pure and self-existent, complete because all-embracing as well as all-absorbing, is the meaning of the way of Bhakti for the seeker of the integral Yoga.

Once it is active in us, all other ways of Yoga convert themselves, as it were, to its law and find by it their own richest significance. This integral devotion of our being to God does not turn away from knowledge; the bhakta of this path is the God-lover who is also the God-knower, because by knowledge of his being comes the whole delight of his being; but it is

in delight that knowledge fulfils itself, the knowledge of the transcendent in the delight of the Transcendent, the knowledge of the universal in the delight of the universal Godhead, the knowledge of the individual manifestation in the delight of God in the individual, the knowledge of the impersonal in the pure delight of his impersonal being, the knowledge of the personal in the full delight of his personality, the knowledge of his qualities and their play in the delight of the manifestation, the knowledge of the quality-less in the delight of his colourless existence and non-manifestation.

So too this God-lover will be the divine worker, not for the sake of works or for a self-regarding pleasure in action, but because in this way God expends the power of his being and in his powers and their signs we find him, because the divine Will in works is the outflowing of the Godhead in the delight of its power, of divine Being in the delight of divine Force. He will feel perfect joy in the works and acts of the Beloved, because in them too he finds the Beloved; he will himself do all works because through those works too the Lord of his being expresses his divine joy in him: when he works, he feels that he is expressing in act and power his oneness with that which he loves and adores; he feels the rapture of the will which he obeys and with which all the force of his being is blissfully identified. So too, again, this God-lover will seek after perfection, because perfection is the nature of the Divine and the more he grows into perfection, the more he feels the Beloved manifest in his natural being. Or he will simply grow in perfection like the blossoming of a flower because the Divine is in him and the joy of the Divine, and as that joy expands in him, soul and mind and life too expand naturally into their godhead. At the same time, because he feels the Divine in all, perfect within every limiting appearance, he will not have the sorrow of his imperfection.

Nor will the seeking of the Divine through life and the meeting of him in all the activities of his being and of the universal being be absent from the scope of his worship. All Nature and all life will be to him at once a revelation and a fine trysting-place. Intellectual and aesthetic and dynamic activities, science and philosophy and life, thought and art and action will assume for him a diviner sanction and a greater meaning. He will seek them because of his clear sight of the Divine through them and because of the delight of the Divine in them. He will not be indeed attached to their appearances, for attachment is an obstacle to the Ananda; but because he possesses that pure, powerful and perfect Ananda which obtains everything but is dependent on nothing, and because he finds in them the ways and acts

and signs, the becomings and the symbols and images of the Beloved, he draws from them a rapture which the normal mind that pursues them for themselves cannot attain or even dream. All this and more becomes part of the integral way and its consummation.

The general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the joy of love takes is the vision of beauty. The God-lover is the universal lover and he embraces the All-blissful and All-beautiful. When universal love has seized on his heart, it is the decisive sign that the Divine has taken possession of him; and when he has the vision of the All-beautiful everywhere and can feel at all times the bliss of his embrace, that is the decisive sign that he has taken possession of the Divine. Union is the consummation of love, but it is this mutual possession that gives it at once the acme and the largest reach of its intensity. It is the foundation of oneness in ecstasy.

SRI AUROBINDO

In following the heart in its purer impulses one follows something that is at least as precious as the mind's loyalty to its own conceptions of what the Truth may be.

SRI AUROBINDO

BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

I

IT is no chance coincidence that of the twenty-eight chapters which constitute the first volume of "The Life Divine", the four central ones are the pivot on which the whole theme of this volume (that of the Omnipresent Reality and the Universe) revolves. For the very plan of the work reflects the dynamic Nature of the Divine and its action between the ever-present One—the immaculate Unity above—and the diversified Many here below. Thus these four central chapters, which deal specifically with the central creative principle of Supermind, very aptly link together two sets of twelve chapters each. Here we note that the first twelve chapters deal primarily with the three principles of the higher Nature,—Spirit, Soul and the Divine Nature itself,—in relation to the Cosmic Consciousness of the totality. The latter twelve chapters, on the other hand, deal primarily with the three principles of the lower Nature—Mind, Life and Matter,—in relation to the Truth-consciousness, which has thus been expounded as the central factor of co-ordination. It is interesting to note also that even each of the two sets of twelve chapters is divisible into three components of four chapters each; thus showing that, even woven into the very pattern of the work, the triple principles of the Divine Nature are not only embraced by the four-fold creative Dynamis of the Divine, but are also inseparably contained in it. On this basis, symbolised in the ancient occult sign of the pentacle (or double triangle) enclosing a central square, we can discern more clearly the dynamic working and complex inter-relation between the three principles of both the higher and lower Natures. For these are not only constituents of the One Supreme, but each also contains the essence and the three-fold Nature of the One, as well as its creative Principle,—the static perfection as well as the dynamic creativity. To dwell further however on the pattern, which is indeed the form of the Divine Creation itself, would tend to obscure the central meaning of the work, since it after all forms but the background motif to it. I have only introduced the idea

of this symbolical arrangement, merely to point out the significant position, —the very keystone of man's higher development,—which the subject of these four central chapters occupies in the whole hierarchy of the cosmic Creation. It is these relevant chapters which I have taken as the theme of this present essay.

Firstly we may observe that these four chapters—in which we discover the central link between the higher and lower Natures,—thus reveal the true relation of the dynamic and creative Nature of Supermind, which constitutes the cosmic bridge by which the aspiring soul below can reach and embrace the Divine Nature above. Hitherto in spiritual thought this central Truth had been either overpassed—in the zeal of aspiration to reach the unchanging Calm of the Transcendent One—or had been confused with some form of "heaven" beyond this world of strife. This had only tended to produce the belief that the ultimate Perfection is a permanent Beyond, wholly incompatible with the hard realities of the world. Thus this earthly life came to be regarded either as a transitory existence or one shrouded in unreality. Yet a World of Light there is, only its remoteness from us has become greatly exaggerated. It is indeed the dynamic and ever-present principle as well as the potent means by which the soul-personality, at present unresolved and latent in man, can meet and unite with the Divine Nature in its utter Perfection and Purity,—without the indivisible entity of soul becoming lost or submerged in the process. In fact it is the only condition whereby the soul can attain its fullness of expression and development. We know all too well from the spiritual experiences of the past that the higher ascent into the pure transcendent Stillness has only drawn the soul irretrievably into that sphere of Calm and Silence beyond,—a static realm wherein the individual being is merely able to rest, detached from the soul's progression through the evolutionary movement of the world. Let us try therefore and see, as far as we can, something of the process and of the constituent nature of this supramental link, wherein both human aspiration and Divine Nature converge. For we recognise that it is this convergent Power alone which can become the dynamic basis of a new creation.

Previously* we have endeavoured to comprehend the truth of Spirit, as representing the omnipresent Reality of the Divine. And hence we were led to accept the ultimate Unity of all things,—form the uttermost Heights to the deepest depths, as diverse expressions of that eternal Spirit. Even

* In a survey of the first twelve chapters

Matter is Spirit concealing and obscuring its true Nature. Secondly we considered the truth of Soul, as the seed of the Divine in man—the concentrated consciousness which has the capacity to grow and ultimately to transform man into the divinised or Gnostic Being. And thirdly we established the truth of the Divine Nature, as the central and dynamic Reality of the universe. It is because of this inherent divinity of all things that we are assured of the ultimate transformation of the world into the true harbinger of the divine Life. Now we have to see and consider the secret cosmic link between Spirit, Soul and the Divine Nature,—that which gives the dynamic Force and movement to these three fundamental elements of the universe, and is in fact the hidden creative Power between man and God which can effect the ultimate transformation of the earth. For it is clear that there must necessarily be some intermediary Power of transformation between the infinite Consciousness of the pure Divine Nature and the finite and constricted consciousness that characterises the phenomenal world. Otherwise how could the Infinite create finitudes?

If Existence is a dynamic process which is thus working out a preconceived Plan or Idea by a supreme Will, then it is more certain that this Idea must necessarily be more than a mentalised creation, which is but an extended form of man's present condition of consciousness. For Mind is primarily a faculty for seeking Knowledge and not for grasping the wholeness of it. This is well enough illustrated by the function of memory, which is not by any means an infallible faculty, and can only retain a certain fund of knowledge to be drawn upon according to the need of the moment. The more fundamental purpose of mind lies essentially in its power to interpret universal truths, and to transmit them into present utilisable values. It is an instrument of knowledge rather than the true possessor of it; and it is not therefore a power which knows and can guide existence, and hence it cannot be the power which has created it. How then can the limitation of mind, upon which man at present depends, know what is beyond its own orbit of experience? For even when it opens itself to realise the distant heights of Existence, its tendency is to gaze complacently from a safe detached distance, where it need not trouble to alter the very structure of its own limitation or broaden its own aperture of perception. Yet this is no knowledge unless it can become an integral part of the being, and enter into all one's activities. It is only when one is confronted by the immediate need of transformation that the mind and vital being show their true reaction to the higher Light, when they begin to shy and shrink from it.

For one then becomes aware that between the static Reality of the Divine Perfection and one's own apparent self-sufficiency, there is a greater Power of which Mind and Life are but derivatives. And naturally Mind's reaction springs largely from its reluctance to give up its established dominant position in the hierarchy of the natural evolution to that which reveals itself to be a superior Power pressing to manifest in the world.

But this is mainly the reactions of the lower ego-charged levels of mind. It is in fact through mind's higher reaches, where a calmer and wider vision reigns, that we can comprehend and accept the higher truths immediately beyond. Mind possesses not only the faculty of ideation whereby it can form some image of the higher truths, but it has also the power of reflection, and by this means can glimpse indirectly, as through a mirror, some penetrative Light from the higher Reality. But we must beware also of the distorting effect of mind's reflection (unless it is made a pure and placid receptacle), and the prolific image-formation in which mind is capable of indulging (unless we develop the power of discrimination to separate reality from fantasy). But it is eventually above mind that we can meet the real and actual undistorted Idea, which belongs to the realm of Truth. In order to try and see what this Idea-in-Reality is, we have to train mind to look beyond itself and recognise a higher power of Knowledge. We then begin to see how insufficient our present conception of the universe really is. We realise that it is a greater Power which holds and secretly controls the world,—a divine Power that is the true instrumental Creator of the world. And what to us is the Ideal, the ultimate Perfection and Harmony, is the Plan or model so to speak, of the Supreme Reality's creative Idea. It is therefore no static ideal, but a dynamic intermediary Power of the Divine that stands between the Supreme, Who is eternally behind all existence, and the phenomenal reality of world manifestation. It is this creative Power that has indeed cast itself into a diversity of manifest forms, each of which centrally contains the seed of that dynamic Power. This may seem paradoxical, judging only by the outer nature of the world, until we realise that a Truth of conscious being really supports the outer forms of the world and expresses itself in and through them,—and is in fact the thread of harmony and inter-relatedness that knits together the whole univese into a veritable Cosmos. It is this Power of Truth and Light, recognised by the ancient Vedic Seers of India and called by them the truth-consciousness, that in its own sphere organises real ideas in a perfect harmony before they are cast into the mould of a mental and material life. We have yet to see the purpose of this descent

of Perfection into what appears to be a distortion and imperfection, but which is really part of a larger movement the aim of which is the emergence of the highest Consciousness even out of the stuff of the Inconscient. In the meantime we might note the significance of the term Real-Idea, which reveals the essential difference between the immature nature of mind and the full creative Power of the higher Truth-plane above. Whereas in mind ideas are at the most a reflection of the Real, in supermind the Idea is the creative seed of all realities, or in other words, it creates the Real out of its own inherent seed-Idea. Supermind is the creative Force behind the world, and it is out of Supermind that a new order can arise. We may be certain therefore, that the ascent to the Supramental is the prelude to the creation here on earth of the necessary conditions, the mould and pattern needed for the establishment of a new Power in the world, of which the descent of that Power and Light into the individualised form of the earth-matured soul is the final step. And thus may Supermind become an embodied Force in the world. It is clear therefore that our mental and physical life belong as yet to an inferior order of consciousnesness and are but partial expressions of that higher Power above, and that only through the highest endeavours of individual effort (self-purification and the training or concentration of mind) can one attain to that greater vision and awareness which is beyond our present dimly lit consciousness.

Since the highest reaches of philosophy—as distinct from spiritual revelation—do not extend beyond the domain of mind, it is not surprising that we find therein the prevalent doctrine that Mind is indeed the creative principle of the world, or at least the sole basis of universal forms. Of such philosophies we may take two distinct types as characteristic. One is the noumenal line of thought, particularly that prevalent in the West, derived as it is from the Greek conception of the Ideal Mind. The other is the type of illusionist philosophy that we find prevalent in eastern thought. In the first type the true reality is regarded as being entirely a derivative of Mind,—that is, of Thought and Idea, albeit universalised. According to Plato the Idea is the archetype of the multiple varieties of existence in the universe, and belong to the supersensible world which is the true Reality. This phenomenal world therefore is but the shadow of that Beyond. In more recent thought also we find Hegel expounding the principle that the Idea (of pure Mind) is the absolute Truth of which everything that exists is the expression. In neither was there the conception that anything other than pure Mind could be the absolute creator of the world. In both cases

the Idea belongs to the region of the higher Mind, universalised in order to bring out an absolute value. But Mind, the symbol of which is the closed circle, is a finite entity, and cannot therefore embrace the Absolute even within its fullest span. It is only a false infinity. For it is in fact that finite quality of mind which gives one the sense of Nothingness beyond its limits of operation. The modern cult of Nihilism is but the inevitable end-product of a conception which regards mind as the highest possible power or force at work in the universe. Likewise in the eastern illusionist philosophies, the true Reality, the absolute Truth, was presumed to be shrouded by an unreality,—the phenomenal world of our sensory perception. Here there was a too hasty overpassing of the whole cosmic Reality, in which the mind was merely content to become a placid pool reflecting the calm Stillness of Spirit, and ignoring or rejecting the creative and dynamic processes inherent in Cosmos. But a change of view does not constitute a change in the aperture of mind. All too readily the mind has seized on the highest conceptions more as an escape from the immediate dynamic need for action and transformation, rather than as a constructive and positive means of embodying that higher status. If mind can contemplate and thus hold these Ideals indefinitely in the Beyond, so much the better for its own peaceful placidity. There is however a spiritual interpretation of Idea which goes beyond these philosophical speculations, in that it is seen to be a creative Power and not merely a static Truth and Ideal. Thus is it termed the Real-Idea, a supra-reality above the world, which is at the same time the dynamic Power of the Conscious Force and the direct delegate of the Supreme. And thus it is the secret link, the creative instrument between the higher Nature above—static, infinite and unchanging,—and the manifest lower Nature, mutable emergent and separative, here below.

It is clear that the Conscious Force of the Divine Nature, which forms the substratum of all energy and consciousness in the world, must necessarily have an intermediary Power—a power of formation—in order to create a world of finite entities. For Conscious Force, being in itself an infinite Consciousness, had thus to delegate its Power to a dynamic plane of action before it could extend itself into the finite forms of the evolutionary process. It was this creative Power of formation which the ancient Seers termed Maya, —not the Maya of illusion it was taken to be by later philosophies, in attempting to interpret this creative Power as a veil between the Real and this phenomenal world in which the soul is captively enmeshed. For it is not an obscuration—a mere weaver of illusions—between man and the highest

Reality, but indeed the divine instrumentality, the divine Maya we might say, which possesses the Force and very Nature of the Divine in its full Dynamis. It is this divine Power of Supermind that is the dynamic Soul, the central pivot around which the whole creativity of Cosmos revolves.

This creative Force of supramental Power, of which mind is but an instrument in the evolutionary Nature, aims to bring out in manifest form that which is already contained in the Truth-plane above. This is made possible by the fact that the seed of this divine Power, containing the essential Nature of the Divine—both static and dynamic principles—is already secreted in the heart of all things. This scattering of its seed-Self was in fact the prelude to the long and devious evolutionary progression of which the mentalised being is the present terrestrial outcome. The principal character of this progression is the gradual emergence of Perfection, and its working in the cosmic Vast is necessarily based on a higher Law and Knowledge which can see the goal towards which the movement of the world is directed. How then can the reasoning power of mind, which is our present principal faculty of knowledge, help us to fathom those unfathomable depths or to scan that infinite Vast? Reason is struck dumb by this wider vista. It can lead us along the lower steps towards a wider knowledge, but when the higher flight has to be made it must consent to be silenced rather than become restive and afeard by the plunge into the Unknown. It is only when we cease to reason and go deep into ourselves, while the activity of mind is stilled, that we begin to be aware of that greater Consciousness whose embryo is within us. And we discover that our embryonic Self is but waiting to be opened to the higher Light, beyond the veil of mind's obscurity, so that it can freely grow into its true stature in the being. For this attainment it is necessary therefore, that we turn and open ourselves unreservedly to that creative supramental Power. With a full knowledge and assurance we can turn, knowing that therein resides all our hopes and aspirations for the ultimate deliverance of the world.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION

(VI)

OUR survey of the Mother's teaching on Yogic action draws to a close. We have seen that the primary and principal aim of Yogic action is union with the Divine. A disinterested doing of all action as an offering to the Divine, without allowing any desire or preference to enter into it, is the first step. In proportion as desirelessness and self-offering progress, one advances, in an increasing purity and freedom, towards union and communion with the Divine. It is at this stage, when a certain silence has been established in the mind and the central consciousness has become transparent and limpid, that the Divine Will manifests itself, intermittently, as if in sudden flashes, in the beginning, and afterwards more clearly, definitely and constantly; and the will of the divine worker unites with it in a rapture of ardent self-giving. If the primary and principal object of Yogic action is union, the ultimate object is the flawless expression of the divine Will in the liberated and transformed individual. The fullness of the self-giving is the most important condition of this double fulfilment—divine union and divine self-expression.

But what usually happens in many spiritual seekers is that the most developed and enlightened part of their being surrenders itself to the Divine, but the other parts, comprising even those of which they are not themselves quite aware, remain entrenched in customary habits and let themselves be moved by the forces of ignorance; and it is often these unsurrendered and unregenerate parts that cash in upon the progress of the enlightened part and feel a glow of vicarious self-exaltation. This state can continue long; for, the sense of surrender gives a sort of justification to all one's actions and general ways of life, and one hardly feels any imperative call for the change of the whole being. If the enlightened part is under the direct influence of the psychic or the soul, there is a possibility of a total change. The cosy sense of self-exaltation fades away sooner or later giving place to a haunting sense of want, sometimes a positive, poignant feeling

of inner destitution and forlornness. This augurs well, for, it shows that the psychic influence is spreading to all parts of the being, preluding and compelling an earnest seeking and effort. The discontent may be vague in the beginning, and one may not even know what it is for; but it grows, becomes more and more insistent and articulate and definite, till the dominant will gathers up all the threads of the consciousness and constrains the unaspiring, apathetic and recalcitrant parts of the being to pay homage to the central ideal of life. But if the mind has taken the lead in the sadhana and the psychic influence is but faintly felt in moments of idealistic exaltation or emotional ardours, the total change may be long in coming, or may not come at all in the present life. And this is a common enough eventuality, which illustrates the Biblical dictum that many are called, but only a few are chosen; for it is only those who have given all of themselves that are chosen.

This completeness of the turning is the most decisive and determining factor in spiritual life. Especially, in the integral Yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, nothing abiding can be achieved without an integral surrender. Experiences in the mind and the heart, or even in the higher and deeper reaches of consciousness are, in themselves, ineffectual to change the whole man;—his outer dynamic parts, which are slaves of mechanical habits and susceptible to the suggestions and impressions of the subconscient or the streaming influences of the surroundings, refuse to submit to any new orientation and discipline. The utility or rather the indispensability of Yogic action comes in just here; for, it is impossible to change the outer active nature without imposing upon it the attitude of self-offering in detail. An active, detailed self-offering, an offering of all one's external movements and of the will itself to the Divine, is the most effective way of purifying and transforming the whole nature.

But here too there is a difficulty. The hold of the ego is nowhere so fixed, so inertly, rigidly automatic as in our physical personality. Though it is stronger and more dominant and perverse in the vital, more subtly pervasive and masterful in the mind, the ego has an uncanny density in the physical being, which is almost impervious to the influence of any higher light, short of the highest, the supramental. In a global overmental experience, there does take place a complete universalisation of consciousness, but in normal moments of active physical consciousness, the ego in the body is found to persist as an unrelenting menace and veto against the universalisation achieved. That is why the seekers of the Spirit have always cherished an

undisguised contempt for the body and its consciousness, and tried to live as far as possible in the depths of their being or on the heights. This inert, mechanical persistence of the ego in the physical consciousness is considerably due to its roots being in the obscure regions of the subconscient, where the light of the higher consciousness does not reach and act. The way to eliminate this ego is not, therefore, an aversion to action and a retreat into the depths, but a constant and conscious offering of all action to the Divine with a persistence as dogged, as uncompromising and as relentless as that of the physical ego itself. The attitude of surrender and offering has to be rubbed into the physical being till it oozes down into the subconscient and becomes permanently fixed there. In the inertia of matter lies the hidden power of tenacious retention; and if the attitude of offering is once stamped upon it, it will hold on to it, as it holds on to the ego today. Yogic action, therefore, is indispensable if the ego is to be wiped out of the physical consciousness and the Divine made the sole master of it. But the final victory and the absolute divine possession of the whole physical being will come, as we have already indicated, by the descent of the supramental Force, which will unloose all the knots of the ego and steep the whole being in a living sense of the infinite. In the luminous amplitude of the supramental consiousness, the ego, including the physical ego, will attain a painless Nirvana.

Let us illustrate what the Mother means by the offering of all actions. She says, "Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it; not only every mental action, every thought and feeling, but even the most ordinary and external actions, such as eating; when you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have in you unity instead of division. No longer is one part of your nature given to the Divine, while the rest remains in its ordinary ways, engrossed in ordinary things; your entire life is taken up, an integral transformation is gradually realised in you."* Sri Krishna's injunction to Arjuna in the Gita to offer all that he does, eats, renounces gives and strives for in the way of askesis, is in line with this teaching of the Mother. But this detailed surrender is very difficult to achieve. An unflagging will and a sleepless vigilance, harnessed to a constant and comprehensive aspiration, can alone discipline and integrate all parts of the being and offer all their

* *Words of the Mother*

movements from moment to moment to the Divine. And Yogic action is the only means by which this detailed self-offering can be effected.

In the Prayer of November 28, 1912, which we have studied in the first essay of this series,* the Mother speaks of the daily activity being the "anvil on which all the elements of our being must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them." The Prayer, as we have seen in that essay, is remarkable as an outline of the Yogic action and demonstrates its indispensability for the integral realisation of the Divine. The Prayer we quote below—it is the last Prayer in the Mother's "Prayers and Meditations" —sums up the fundamental qualities necessary for yogic action; it covers the whole field of life, its pith and pulse and purpose, and brings out in bold relief the ideal attitude of a servant of God:—

(A Prayer for those who wish to serve the Divine)

October 23, 1937

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, who triumphest over every obstacle.

Grant that nothing in us shall be an obstacle in Thy work.

Grant that nothing may retard Thy manifestation.

Grant that Thy Will may be done in all things and at every moment.

We stand here before Thee that Thy Will may be fulfilled in us, in every element, in every activity of our being, from our supreme heights to the smallest cells of the body.

Grant that we may be faithful to Thee utterly and for ever.

We would be completely under Thy influence to the exclusion of every other.

Grant that we may never forget to own towards Thee a deep, an intense gratitude.

Grant that we may never squander any of the marvellous things that are Thy gifts to us at every instant.

Grant that everything in us may collaborate in Thy work and all be ready for Thy realisation.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, Supreme Master of all realisation.

Give us a faith active and ardent, absolute and unshakable in Thy Victory."

* See *The Advent*, Feb. 1950

In the integral Yoga self-surrender can be said to be the very first step; which means that, for the overcoming of difficulties as well as for the purification of our nature, we depend not upon our own strength and endeavour, but upon the Grace and Force of the Divine. That is why in the first line of the Prayer quoted above, the Mother addresses the Divine as the Lord "who triumphest over every obstacle." In fact and in actual experience, it is the Divine who does the sadhana (Yoga) in one who has surrendered to Him in all sincerity; and it is He who removes all obstacles, lurking within us or assailing us from without. In the second line, therefore, the Divine is prayed for "that nothing in us shall be an obstacle to Thy work." But what is that work? Manifestation,—manifestation of the Divine in Matter. And what is the best means of bringing about the fullness of this manifestation? It is the fulfilment of the Divine Will "in all things and at every moment." When our will, purified of all desire and egoism, unites and co-operates with the divine Will, then the latter can fulfil itself freely in our life and nature, "in every activity of our being, from our supreme heights to the smallest cells of the body." This is a state of surpassing joy and freedom, a joy and freedom which no desire-ridden human being can ever know. But in order to attain this state and maintain it, we have to develop along with surrender, faithfulness, gratitude, the capacity for cherishing, conserving and making the right use of the 'marvellous things that are Thy (God's) gifts to us at every instant," an integral and dynamic aspiration for collaborating in the divine work, and most important of all, faith, a faith "active and ardent, absolute and unshakable", not only in the Divine, but in His Victory. Faithfulness means to be completely under the the influence of the Divine, to the exclusion of every other influence. Gratitude, the rarest of virtues, has to be deep and intense and constant for the marvellous things,—the inspiring flashes of light, the spurts of force and the thrills of delight, among other things,—that are God's "gifts to us at every instant. It would be suicidal for a seeker of the integral union and perfection to squander or to be negligent or indifferent to the gifts of the Divine, whether they are material or spiritual. Even the material things that come to him for his use are not only from the Divine, but afire with the Divine, and have, therefore, to be handled in the right spirit and with a loving and scrupulous care. His life is a sacrament and his possessions are a trust from the Divine; and his active progress and perfection depend upon the spirit in which he makes use of them. Lastly, what is most fruitful in the self-surrendering attitude of the servant of the Divine, is a resolute

will to collaborate in the divine work with an absolute, unshakable faith in the ultimate Victory. This collaboration implies an active, and not a passive surrender; the perception of the divine Will and the nature and purpose of its work, and a conscious and constant co-operation in that work with an unwavering faith in its final accomplishment—the full and perfect manifestation of God in the material world.

The only objective we have to set before ourselves, in this age at least, is the Victory of the Divine over the forces of darkness—over Ignorance, Falsehood and Death. This is the great work we are called upon to undertake and achieve. What is the means, the sovereign means by which this Victory will be won? It is Love, the highest and mightiest Force of the Supreme. In her Prayer of the 23rd July, 1914, the Mother invokes the Divine to achieve this Victory:—

"O Lord, Thou art all-powerful; become the fighter and win the victory. May Thy Love dwell as the sovereign Master of our hearts and Thy Knowledge never leave our thoughts...Do not abandon us in impotence and darkness; shatter all limits, break all chains, dispel all illusions....."

And in the Prayer of the 17th October, 1914, she confides to us the promise of the Divine Mother with whom she is identified:—

"O Divine Mother, the obstacles will be surmounted and the enemies appeased. Thou wilt reign over all the earth with Thy sovereign love, and the consciousness of men will be full of the light of Thy serenity.

This is the promise."

To conclude. The Mother teaches a dynamic and integral surrender to the Divine through Yogic action, which is the most effective means of purifying and transforming the active surface nature of man, especially the vital-physical. Since the aim of her Yoga is no mere purification but a radical transfiguration of the integral being of man, she insists on detailed surrender, surrender of each thought and feeling and action, to the Divine. Transformation of the whole being will naturally permit of a constant and complete union with the Divine and an unimpeded expression of His Will in the life of the human instrument. This Will is, for the present period of human evolution at least, as we learn from the Mother

and Sri Aurobindo, a Will to Victory over the forces of darkness and death, and a manifestation of God's supramental sovereignty and splendour in the material world.

Those who have felt or perceived the transcendental greatness of this work of the establishment of the supramental life or the Life Divine upon earth, and dedicated themselves to it, can have no hankering for personal salvation, though liberation from ignorance and egoism is a pre-condition of the perfection of this work; nor can they cherish an exclusive desire for peace or power. For them "There is a Power which no government can command, a Happiness which no earthly success can give, a Light which no wisdom can possess, a Knowledge which no philosophy, no science can acquire, a Beatitude of which no satisfaction of desire can give the enjoyment, a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench, a Peace which can be found nowhere, not even in death.

"It is the Power, the Happiness, the Light, the Knowledge, the Beatitude, the Love and the Peace which come.....from the Divine Grace."*

March 28, 1951. RISHABHCHAND

Prayers and Meditations of The Mother, Oct. 28, 1928

*Sādhana Sāmrājyam**

Sovereign Sway of Sadhana

(Continued from last issue)

13. Therefore, always the mind must somehow rest in perfect quietude; the pure flame in the heart, the aspiration for the highest step must be constant; in the midst of thoughts wedded to worldly objects, the indivisible vision must reign supreme. In the august Presence of the Father of the triune-world what is not possible?[1]

Therefore, says the author, the very first requisite in the Sadhana is to somehow quiet the outgoing and agitative mind. But can the mind be quieted at all? Is it not its nature to be active in thoughts which are its very texture? It is not. The mind "is not a jumble of feelings and passions, desires and sensations, or even a sheer repertory of thoughts. It is, certainly, an instrument of thought and expression; but in its true part it is a calm, transparent, reflecting apparatus receiving and transmitting truths and true ideas shaping them into thought-forms, translating them into its own terms. When it reflects the desires, passions and other activities of the lower life, they are mentalised, and are reflex actions which do not really form part of the true character and function of the mind. That is why some later Upanishads speak of mind being twofold: the one is higher, *param* and pure *shuddham*, naturally calm; the other is the lower

* Sanskrit verses of Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry, translated into English with annotation by M. P. Pandit.

[1] ततः स्वान्तं शान्तं कथमपि भवेत् सिद्धमनिशं
शुचिज्वाला नित्या परमपदकाङ्क्षा च हृदये।
अखण्डार्था दृष्टिर्विषयधिषणावृत्तिषु जयेत्
सति श्रीसान्निध्ये त्रिभुवनगुरोः किं न सुलभम् ॥१३॥

aparam, and impure *ashuddham*, soiling the mirror of mind with desires etc. screening its natural purity and quietude from being effective. When we consider the question of mind which is essentially calm in its pure nature, we can well appreciate the yogic disciplines that lay stress on the necessity of stilling the mind which would be an impossibility but for the presence of a natural calm in some essential part of mind itself. Incidentally we may remark that this truth of yogic psychology is a standing challenge to some of the popular theories of modern science that hold that an uninterrupted flow of thoughts is an essential characteristic of mind, which is the very opposite of quietude. Needless to say that this is not valid in the light of yogic experience." Also, "a settled quiet of the mind, a certain poise and peaceful disposition of the being, aloof from the common distractions of life and its interests.....is *shanti* as a condition of the *upasana*. This is so, because the worship which implies concentration on what is worshipped would not be possible in the face of other objects of interest overpowering the mind with their claim to be enshrined in the quietude and disturbing the poise of the being." That done, care must be taken to nourish the flame of aspiration in the heart. It is already awake, for without some such awakening, no one is impelled to turn to the life of the Spirit. What is wanted is a sedulous nourishing of this tender plant of the soul, a fostering of the atmosphere in which it would grow and reach out to the most external parts of man. That is to say, a rigorous exclusion from one's movements, of the body, mind and life, of all is that is opposed to the growth of the Aspiration and a cultivation of such things as are favourable to its fruition viz. mental refinement, emotive catharsis, dedicated service etc., is the immediate desideratum. Again it should be a constant endeavour to develop and normalise the 'indivisible vision'—the vision or outlook which sees the Vast, the supreme One everywhere, the partless One in all, amidst all thoughts and movements going forth to meet the contacts of the world. The vision of the whole must be dominant; mental and other activities which have to be of practical necessity several and distinctive when they deal with diverse sense-objects, have yet to be carried out with the background of and governed by this whole-souled vision, which sees the *akhanda*, the infinite vast everywhere.

To quiet the mind, to keep the inner flame of aspiration constantly burning, to normalise and enthrone the indivisible vision as the guiding factor in all one's activities, is not easy for human effort. In fact each of these is a Sadhana by itself and should normally take up the greater

part of man's effort. But, reminds the author, here we are not proceeding on our own strength. We have sought and are waiting upon the Lord of the three worlds. And in his presence nothing is difficult. His presence is august, happy, fulfilling; he is the supreme creator and nothing is outside his power to effect.

14. By meditation day and night, by performance of holy rites, by hard penances, from observing closely the laws of one's own Faith, or by silent repetition of sacred syllables, by hundreds of vows of discipline, by invocation of the Name, man certainly obtains some result strength-giving, that removes the fatigue.[1]

Not that human effort can achieve nothing. Individual effort has a place and an important place too in spiritual life as in the life ordinary. 'There is no success for one inactive', *nasti siddhih akarmanah* (Mahabharata Shantiparva, 10. 26). The epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Puranas and other literature bearing upon the spiritual and cultural history of this land are full of narrations of the indefatigable efforts on the part of seekers of God. And these exertions do bring out results corresponding to the will and sincerity put behind them. Thus for instance, they meditate in an intense manner day and night with a view to merge themselves in the object of meditation in due course. Meditation, with or without concentration as a part of it, gradually leads to the turning of and converging of the consciousness in the desired object and at its highest effects a return of the consciousness to its peak in trance. Then there are holy rites like the Yajna, the various *vratas*, by a faithful performance of which the individual hopes to equip himself with the necessary unction for the consummate gifts of the Gods; hard penances, moderation in or periodical denial of food, sleep etc. are familiar to most of us as parts of such disciplines. Scrupulous adherence to the way of life prescribed, the *dharma* of one's own faith is considered to be another means. There is also the famous Mantra-sadhana. There is the discipline of vows which puts the human system through a series of regulations of self-denial and seeks to purify and equip the being for the favour of the Almighty. Last there is the simple but

[1] अहोरात्रध्यानाद्बहुलशरदः कर्मचरणात्
तपोभिः कृच्छ्रैर्वा निजसमयधर्मानुसरणात्।
जपैर्वा मन्त्राणां व्रतविधिशतैर्नामभजनात्
नरः प्राप्नोत्येव श्रमहरबलं किञ्चन फलम् ॥१४॥

wonderfully effective mode of the Invocation of the Name of the Lord, *nāmasmarana*. The very syllable of the Name possesses a power and strength which yield themselves to the seeker in the process of the repitition; his whole being gets charged as it were with the vibration of the Name-Power. The Name of God, the Name of the Guru when repeated with faith opens out some channel of communication to the Invoked; the Name is an intimate part of the Person. The repetition of the name sets up an atmosphere around the being of the seeker in which everything else but the thought of Him whose name is called dwindles, enveloping him with a growing sense of an immense supremacy of the Lord and in this receptive condition the response from the Invoked cannot fail to be effective.

All these are truly efficacious means. Each one of them gives some result and the seeker is certainly a gainer and does see some benefit accruing to him. But the question is, could not more be achieved with the help of the Grace of the Lord answering to the aspiration and effort of the human soul? And could the difficult aim of this particular Sadhana, the most important part of which is the conquest of Matter by the Light of the Spirit, be accomplished by these endeavours? The next verse gives the answer.

15. This success where the sovereign sway of the conquest of Matter is supreme is not possible by the toils of mortals without the glance of the Immortal Guru. The success whence the Peace self-born becomes settled and then too, not dull; and a self-aware Force spreads bearing fruit (fruit-bearing play) in the body dense.[1]

Personal effort, while indispensable, does not achieve decisive results without the help of Guru or God in any line of spiritual life. "All the personal exertions in the Sadhana with their fruits, do not arrive at the core of realisation, or soar to the highest summit. One can go, with the means at his disposal won by Sadhana, deep within towards the innermost apartment of the Self, and knock and knock, but the door of the chamber is still closed; he has to wait and watch until the door opens at the will of the Atman who is the revealer. Nowhere in the Upanishads where instuc-

[1] प्रयासैर्मर्त्यानाममृतगुरुदृक्पातवियुतै–
रियं सिद्धिर्न स्यात् जडविजयसाम्राज्यपरमा।
यतः शान्तिः सिद्धा भवति सहजा साऽप्यनलसा
घने शक्तिः प्राज्ञा वपुषि परिपाकं च तनुते ॥१६॥

tions of the Sadhanas are given, we find that the realisation is the fruit of the personal effort alone. These disciplines and methods of approach prepare the journey towards the goal and make one fit for the consummation. Even when an exclusive choice is made for realising the Self, it is the Self that reveals its own body to the seeker—*tasya esha atma vivrinute tanum swam*—and not that the seeker storms the gate and discovers the Self by the merit of his own Sadhana." For decisive steps in the inner life, the active support and intervention of the Guru is indispensable. And in a Sadhana of this kind which has set for itself a new and hitherto unattempted goal, progress, much less success, is inconceivable without the guidance, help and lead of its path-finder—the Immortal Guru, immortal because he embodies the immortal Light which is at the head of this Yoga of Nature. The aim of this Sadhana is different from that of other Yogas where the processes, the paths and the goal are more or less fixed, standardised in traditional disciplines. A complete conquest of the domain of dense matter by the Light of the Divine, a deliverance of the body from thraldom to the forces of ignorance and inconscience imbedded in matter into the free and transforming light of the highest Spirit is the central aim of this Sadhana. A consistent endeavour to release the soul from the bonds of un-awareness and develop an increasing degree of consciousness is noticeable in the strivings of Nature; to complete this process is the object of this Yoga and hence it is also described as the Yoga of Nature; a progressive deepening and heightening of one's consciousness leading to a spiritualisation of the various parts of the being, a realisation of the inner Divine is the fundamental basis of the process which is worked out mainly by the Shakti of the Master. The evocation and establishment of the next higher principle in the scale of evolution beyond Mind viz. Vijnana in man is the crucial step by which the conquest and transformation of Matter is sought to be made possible. For only so can it be done. "This higher principle is immediately and directly divine in its nature and functioning; it is spiritual, higher than the mind which is the highest principle that has been so far organised for functioning on earth." "It is far above the Mind and therefore far above the Ignorance, is self-luminous, intimately spiritual, directly divine in its domain, in knowledge, strength and force of movement and action. It is a Light." It is the direct action of this Light that alone could successfully tackle the obstinate inertia of Matter and to set it working here on earth, in man, is the aim and goal of this Sadhana. Obviously no human effort could achieve it. Only the grace of the Guru, the discoverer of the path, Sri Aurobindo,

can enable the seeker to open himself more and more to the Shakti whose power it is to work out and bestow the *siddhi*, success. As the Sadhana progresses in its assured course of success, notable results follow. The Peace from the heights is consciously felt infiltrating into the texture of one's being. It is constantly experienced as coursing through the body and Peace becomes as constant and as natural as the feeling of the physical body. In this settled Peace the individual finds the meeting ground to embrace the Vaster universe around. And this Peace is not inactive or a lifeless something, not *analasa* as we are apt to imagine. It is ceaselessly wakeful, not dull. The peace is intensely fruitful and prepares and disposes the body to a citadel of strength rendering it capable of responding spontaneously in the divine way to all outside contacts. A Force is at work effecting the Sadhana in the being. It is not a mechanical or half-lit force, but a Shakti that is knowing, self-aware, *prajna*, that is taking up every part of the being and works upon it by way of purification, subtilisation and integration with other parts so as to render the whole ready to bear the fruit. The material base, the physical body of man is constituted of dense matter which in its very nature is inert, ignorant and is opposed to the entry of light which would eliminate its very nature. But this self-aware force, ceaselessly presses upon it, from above, from below, from within and prepares it, renders it suitable for 'bearing fruit' i.e. for yielding the result that is aimed at.

16. When our heart becomes the dwelling place of God's grace (lit. Pashupati, the Lord of beings), the mind forsaking its prattle futile ceases to be and rests on the grounds of purity; the boundless Vast overpowers (and fills) the inside and the outside as well; and in the mind the world vacates, the Greatness of the world's Lord reigns supreme.[1]

When the heart becomes the tabernacle of the Grace of the Lord, the whole being is filled with a living sense of His Presence and the restless mind under pressure of this all-round silence gives up its little noises, its useless prattlings and settles down to what is its native base—where all is

[1] प्रसादस्यावासे भवति हृदये नः पशुपते–
र्मुधाजल्पं मुक्त्वा विरमति मनो निर्मलतले।
समाक्रामत्यन्तर्बहिरपि स भूमाऽप्यनवधिः
जगद्रिक्ते चित्ते जयति जगदीशस्य महिमा ॥१६॥

clear, reflecting and spotless, pure and transparent and finds there its natural poise. The Vast, the consciousness of the Infinite which is unrolling itself in the being, spreads out all over and the seeker finds the same Vast, whether he looks within himself or outside his body. Thus the greatness and glory of the Lord fills up the spaces of the mind which have been emptied of the myriad crowded objects of the world. The cup needs to be emptied before it is filled and hence to clear the mind of all its frothy content is the *sine qua non* for making of it a temple for the Supreme presence.

17. This is the peerless start, splendorous, of the compassionate side-long look of the Guru adorable, the Lord of the Yoga, the builder of the new world. This is the Dawn's dusky glow with its pervasive lustre, gliding in all quarters of the sky,—the dawn's dusky glow of the rays of the Sun from afar on the Udaya hill (where the sun rises).[1]

This is the commencement of the Sadhana proper—a silent mind functioning in its proper rôle of a reflecting and transparent surface, an active Peace beginning to course into the being and the self-aware Shakti of the Lord preparing the system for bearing fruit. It is the first glowing result of the compassionate glance of the Guru, the path-finder and perfector of this path of Purna Yoga which is the sole means for building up a newer and a fuller world, for the building of a world in which knowledge and light shall be the ruling principle instead of ignorance and darkness as in the present. This auspicious advent of the Light heralded by these happy realisations growing from all the sides is like the dusky glow of the early dawn whose onsetting light increasingly pervades the quarters of the skies. Once it is begun, the steady growth and spread and the full bright manifestation above the horizon is inevitable. This gliding of the lustre of the rays of the rising Sun of Truth is aptly compared to the glow of the morning sun on mount Udaya. For in the Vedic symbolism, the physical sun stands for the supreme Sun of spiritual Truth, the supramental Light of which the solar body is the glorious image. The break of the dawn is on the highest peak

[1] अयं च प्रारम्भो गुरुचरणयोगेश्वरकृपा–
कटाक्षस्य श्रीमान् नवभुवननिर्मातुरतुलः।
अयं व्याप्तद्योतो दिशिदिशि विसर्पन् दिनमणे–
र्मयूखानां दूरादुदयगिरिभाजामरुणिमा ॥१७॥

of the hill as of the being of man. The Sun is not yet; it is only the far-off glow of the shooting rays of the rising sun—the Light of supreme Truth.

(to be continued)

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

Nothing is more dangerous than the influences of the physical mind trying to build up conclusions upon outward appearances—they have nine chances out of ten of being false. One must learn to distrust hasty conclusions from surface appearances—is not that the first condition of true knowledge?—and learn to see and know things from within.

SRI AUROBINDO

REVIEW

History of India—Part II, Mediaeval India—*By Nilkanta Sastri.* Price Rs. 7-8.

We have already had the pleasure of reviewing the first part of the book in this journal. The present volume relates to the Muslim period of Indian history and is divided into nine chapters. The titles of these chapters give us an idea of the general arrangement of the book and of the mentality of its learned author. They are: I. Early Muslim inroads—II. The Sultanate of Delhi—III. Nature and effects of Muslim rule (711-1199)—IV. The Minor Kingdoms of the North (1200-1600)—V. The Kingdoms of the South (1300-1600)—VI. The Early Mughals and the Surs (1526-1605)—VII. The Zenith of the Mughal Empire (1605-1707)—VIII. Government and Social Life under the Mughals—IX. The Southern States and the European Companies.

We do not find ourselves in complete accord with this arrangement. The phenomenal rise of the Maratha race to political power in the Deccan, and the marvellous evolution of the Sikh community under its Gurus in North-West India should have received greater attention in separate chapters. Moreover, Kingship, as an institution of the state, underwent considerable development during these centuries. Was there any community of interest between one Muslim king and another? Did these kings owe in theory or practice any allegiance to the Khalifa? We know that Feroze Tughlak secured the support of Baghdad when he imposed the Jazia tax on Non-muslims. But did Akbar seek anybody's support when he abolished that tax or did Aurangzeb consult any outside power when he reimposed it? The first Mussalman state in Sindh was subject to Baghdad during the short period that it existed. In fact, it was not a state at all, strictly speaking; it was a dependency. As a general rule, the Mussalman states in India considered themselves to be independent. The Delhi emperors worked assiduously to wipe them out, both in the north and in the south. The long

drawn warfare between the Sultans of Bengal and the central authority in Delhi is typical of the struggle between the vassal state and the suzerain power in Muslim India. The Bahamani kingdom, while it lasted, did exercise a certain suzerainty over the five Deccan states, but more or less fitfully. These five kingdoms fought against one another and often sought the help of Vijaynagar in these internecine fights. No doubt, in the last struggle, all the five Muslim states combined against the Hindu kingdom, but that was a contingency which Ramaraja could have easily prevented by a little diplomacy. This monarch was not an amiable person and had by a peculiar combination of arrogance and duplicity set all the five kingdoms against him. There was hardly any question of communal frenzy in these kingdoms; they depended a great deal on the goodwill of their Brahmin ministers and of their Kshatriya nobility. In Aurangzeb's dealings with the Marathas on the one hand, and with Bijapur and Golconda on the other, we find him hobnobbing sometimes with the Marathas and sometimes with his correligionists. In a few letters we find the Emperor addressing Sivaji as Muti-ul-Islam—a friend of Islam. In writing a history of Muslim India, we should guard ourselves against being carried way, too far, by the idea of a Jehad. The great idol-breaker (But-shikast), Mahmud of Ghazni, freely enlisted the help of Hindu chieftains against his Muslim enemies in central Asia. The idea of spreading Islam by the sword was by no means the dominant idea in the muslim's mind, once he had settled down in India. Personal ambition, dynastic ambition, racial ambition,—these were more often the true urge behind what appeared like religious zeal. The principal aim of the lesser monarchs was independence, whether they were Hindus or Mussalmans; usually they supported the central power when it suited their own interests, not the interests of their religion or community. No doubt, in exceptional cases we find the rulers of both communities fighting for a righteous cause—the cause of their race or even of their faith. Amongst the Rajputs, for instance, there was a binding tradition that all tribal warfare should cease when the Muslim was at the door. Not that this mandate was obeyed invariably, but more often than not, Rajput chiefs dropped their private quarrels for the while in order to present a common front to the general enemy of Rajasthan. The history of Bengal in the sixteenth century provides us with numerous instances when Pathan and Bengali joined hands to resist the Mughal. Two centuries earlier, we find a Pathan Sultan of Bengal on his death bed, naming as his successor a powerful Hindu baron, Raja Ganesh, who had already combined in himself the dignity of Wazir

with that of Sipah-Salar. This Hindu Sultan ruled Bengal for seven years with the full support of his Afghan nobles. He was succeeded by his son Jadunarayan who had, with his concurrence, turned muslim and married the daughter of the last Pathan Sultan. After Jadu alias Jalaluddin, two more Sultans, both Bengali by race and Muslim by religion sat on the throne of Bengal. Ultimately after some seven decades, the sultanate passed into the hands of a Pathan dynasty. Professor Sastri has referred to Raja Ganesh's rule but appears to convey that the Raja was a usurper who after his accession ill-treated his Muslim subjects. Stewart's history of Bengal and the Persian authority, Riyaz-us-Salateen, do not support this view. Both these books bear out the story that the Afghan sardars boldly supported the Raja's title before the powerful king Ibrahim Jaunpur when he invaded Bengal to chastise the infidel Sultan. It would be almost stupid to depict the muslim period of Indian history as one of confusion and chaos and fanatical outbreaks. There were undoubtedly intervals of racial and communal strife, but they were short-lived compared with the long periods of peace and prosperity, construction and consolidation. Besides, it is a thing that we should never forget that throughout all these centuries, the village self-government continued to function and the even life of the peasant and artisan in the rural area was seldom disturbed seriously. On rare occassions, when the safety of the villages was jeopardised by long continued warfare, the rival rulers themselves entered into a solemn agreement to protect them. One such important treaty between the Bahamani king and the monarch of Vijaynagar is recorded in history. Indeed, there were several such agreements in other parts of India as well. Akbar Shah and Ibrahim Adil and Hussain Khan of Bengal were no doubt monarchs of exceptional statesmanship, who would compare favourably with any contemporary kings anywhere. Harun-al-Rashid of Baghdad, a few centuries earlier, had probably been a greater ruler still. But there were so many Muslim monarchs in India throughout who were no worse than Mary Tudor, Elizabeth, Henri III (Valois) or Phillip II of Spain. The Afghan or Mughal Sultan in our country began, generally speaking, as an arrogant conqueror but stayed on to develop presently into a national ruler, a father of his subjects. We say this from the political point of view. But culturally, and even spiritually, the Muslim and the Hindu toiled side by side, for centuries to produce newer and ever newer ideals in the fields of literature, music, painting, sculpture and architecture. Prof. Shastri has admitted this in chapter VIII of his book, but the general tone of the whole volume is that the Muslim period of our history

was a dark period when there was very little worth the name created in the country. The really dark period in the history of India's culture, says Sri Aurobindo, was the eighteenth century, when the creative instinct of her people died in the midst of a sordid scramble for power, when so many peoples native as well as foreign, threw all ideas of duty and honour to the four winds of heaven and followed the narrow path of self-aggrandisement. Dishonesty and unscrupulousness became the order of the day not only for individuals but for whole peoples. The historian, Colonel Malleson, speaking of Plassey (1757) wrote that the young ruler Seraj-ud-dowlah was the only honest man who took part in the disgraceful transactions of the day. "His name", said the Colonel, "stands far higher in the scale of honour than that of Clive." Clive, Watson, Dupleix, Mir Jaffar, Lally, Bussy, Perron, Hastings, Nandkumar, Raghoba (of Poona)—to cite only a few—it is difficult to decide to whom to award the palm for dishonesty. The men of the three generations prior to these people, Muslim as well as Hindu, were made of a much finer stuff; men like Mansingh, Todarmal, Abul Fazal and Khan Khanan of Akbar's time, or Jaising Jaswantsingh and Dilir Khan of Aurangzeb's days, or the great soldiers and statesmen of Maharashtra and the South, not to speak of the galaxy of fearless soldiers of God like Ramdas and Tukaram, Kabir and Nanak, Chaitanya and Narsi Mehta. We must not forget that even in the literary field the contribution of Muslims was immense. Hussain Khan of Bengal is remembered as the father of Bengali prose. Ibrahim Adil created a new language in Bijapur (a mixture of Persian and Kanarese) and wrote poems in it which are still extant. The work of Akbar and his entourage in the cause of Braja-bhasha is well known. Dara's translation of old Sanskrit books is known to everybody. Let us agree, then, not to call the Muslim monarchs in India foreigners. After Kutubddin's time they had no father-land outside this country. Reading between the lines of Bernier, Tavernier and Manucci—or of Fitch and Du Jarric of a still earlier period—we can see that these people were conscious that they were standing face to face with a great country and an opulent and many-sided civilisation. Sri Aurobindo has said in his Ideal of Human Unity that foreign rule is Dame Nature's favourite expedient when a people fail to make necessary social and political adjustments to meet new environments. The advent of the Muslim, the impact with his vigorous and assertive outlook was found necessary for India's further growth. The political ideal of an India-wide empire was an old one; it was there even before the Muslim's first arrival. It had been aimed at, and all but achieved more than once.

Rajasuya and Ashwamedha were the sacrifices indicated by the ancient sages to the king who claimed suzerainty, as a Rajachakravarti over other Rajas. The advent of puissant alien invaders hastened the process of empire-building in India. The student of history has seen how the invasion of the mighty Alexander facilitated the establishment of Chandragupta's empire. From that time onward the old self-centred Hindu kingdoms with their autonomous Panchayats and Guilds gradually decayed and in their place arose a series of powerful Rajachakravartis like Asoka, Harsha, Lalitaditya and Samudragupta in the North and the Andhra and Chola emperors in the South. Later on, when the Afghans pushed on towards the Krishna valley there arose, as a bulwark against their onset, the mighty empire of Vijayanagar, a resuscitation, as it were, of the power and prestige of the Chola Mahamandal. The unity of India had to materialise, all India had to come under one central authority. What the ancients had dreamt of had to be achieved; it was so predestined by India's Providence. The interlude of the muslim conquest was necessary to give it a greater momentum and a larger scope. In the course of evolution, the unifying central power had to clash with the desire for local freedom, again and again, to clear the atmosphere. The clash had to come in many forms, dynastic, racial and religious,—Humayan vs. the Surs, Akbar vs. the Sultans of Gujrat and Ahmednagar and the Rani of Mandla, Aurangzeb against Sivaji and the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda,—always the steam roller going ahead to flatten out the little ridges and mounds on the road. It is not for the student of history to take sides. Bruce and Wallace and Llillwyn were as necessary to the future growth of one single Britain as their enemy the king of England. At one point during his struggle with Aurangzeb, Sivaji claimed the constitutional position of Sardeshmukh of the Deccan—the chief executive authority in Maharashtra under the Emperor. If Auranzeb had admitted that claim there would have been peace between the Maratha and the Mughal for the time being. But Providence intervened. Aurangzeb disallowed the claim and Sivaji was led on to push ahead and achieve the position of Chhatrapati —Overlord of Maharashtra.

Islam was too vigorous a force to be swallowed up as so many others had been before. India had to stand up to this new civilisation and work out a newer and larger synthesis. Most wonderful things happened in the course of this synthetising. Many of them were subtle and intangible. But the building of a marble temple in the Bijapur citadel by Yusuf Adil Shah for his favourite Brahmin wife Babuji Khanan, the erection of a Hindu

shrine in Delhi by Alamgir for his Jodhpuri Begum, the construction of a mosque in Raigad itself by Sivaji for his Muslim naval officers are visible symbols of the spirit of harmony which lay behind the outer struggle. For a proper understanding of the course of social, cultural and even political evolution it is necessary for us to remember that in India, implicitly if not explicitly, life has largely been guided by the Spirit. The political freedom of our country has been a necessity in order that we should realise this guidance fully and give out the true implication of human life to the world at large. For this alone has India tried so strenuously and achieved freedom.

It is not that the learned author has ignored these inner aspects of Indian history. In chapter VIII, already referred to, he has considered at some length the cultural side of life in the Mughal period. Likewise, in the first chapter, he has given a fine account of the rise of Islam and its message to the world. But even a casual glance would convince the reader that Professor Sastri has treated the organic side, the evolutionary aspect of history very casually. Mahmud of Ghazni was a rude soldier; we have already said that he secured the friendship and cooperation of some Hindu soldier princes. Why trouble to bring up the evidence of Alberuni to prove that Mahmud held Hindu science and philosophy in great contempt? If there were Mahmuds amongst the Muslim kings, there were also the Caliphs of Baghdad. What about the broad-minded Alberuni himself and a man like Ibu-Batuta? Were they not Mussalmans? Were not the centres of learning at Baghdad, Alexandra and Cordova Islamic?

The book under review is a book on political history, principally concerned with the chronological sequence of historic events. As such, it is a remarkable book. Every page of it bears testimony to the learned author's industry and astonishing grasp of facts. The university student will find the volume extremely useful. But the ordinary reader looks for something more; he wants to understand the philosophy of history, nay, even the romance of history; he wants to know how India has experimented with the great principles of human life, with what success she has applied them to the shaping of her national existence. This is all we need say to a savant of Professor Sastri's standing. A study of the history of India up to 1707 AD should prepare us to realise the why and the wherefore of the subsequent British regime, to understand the causes of the rapid decay of the Indian character from 1707 to 1802-03. The sudden collapse of the Sikh state after Ranjit Singh's death can be understood only by taking into account the general decline of morals that had set in earlier, the general moral degradation that

had already eaten up so many other states. But all this strictly relates to the next period of Indian history. It is not our purpose to compare the British with the Mughals as rulers of India, but one very great difference one must never forget,—that the Great Mughal was an Indian and not a foreigner, and that he had no interest in draining out India's wealth.

One last word. We have said what we have said, not by way of disparagement of the excellent book before us, but because we wanted to lay before the reader our own vision of the Muslim regime in India as a dispensation of Providence.

C. C. DUTT

SRI AUROBINDO MEMORIAL CONVENTION SUPPLEMENT

Inaugural Message of the Mother

24th April, 1951

Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the university centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of to-day into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

In his name I open to-day this Convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals.

DR. SHYAMAPRASAD MUKHERJEE*

It is difficult for an ordinary individual to realise in full the significance of the message of Sri Aurobindo's life and teaching. His philosophy forms an integrated system of thought created out of the highest and most sustained efforts of the human spirit. It is given to very few of us to attain that level

* Extracts from the Presidential Speech

of spiritual effort, for it demands a thorough discipline of the body and the mind, and what is still more difficult, the sacrifice of the immediate for the ultimate. Once upon a time, the Rishis of ancient India rose above the calls of the present, the clash of arms, the rise and fall of Empires, to contemplate the eternal verities of existence.

Coming much nearer to our own times, when the favourite disciples of Guru Govind wanted him to lead them in the affairs of the world, he declined and warned them not to tempt him with ephemeral offerings. Similarly, when in 1922 Mr. C. R. Das asked for Sri Aurobindo's help in the political struggle, the sage declined on the ground that he had not attained the fullest realisation of the spiritual reality, without which efforts to seek the salvation of mankind would only create an illusion.

These spiritual efforts of the great masters often defy common understanding. Yet the call of the times was never so imperious as it is now. What India is suffering from today is not so much the poverty of material existence. She is suffering much more from the bankruptcy of her spiritual resources. The Government moves in the same vicious circle. Moral standards are at a discount. High purpose is reserved exclusively as an adornment of pontifical pronouncements from high offices. The scene is virtually littered with the debris of the spiritual achievements of a people that was once great.

The fact is that we have lost track of our real culture. The culture of a people, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. "There is", he explains, "a side of thought, ideal, upward will and the soul's aspiration; a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and a side of practical and outward formulation". Philosophy and religion belong to the first of these three aspects of culture; art, poetry, literature to the second; and society and politics to the third. In India, however, the master idea that has governed the life, culture and social ideals of her people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life. We have lost track of this noble idea. A base hedonistic view of life seems to inform all our activities today, even where they belong to the realm of the first two aspects of culture.

It is thus that the establishment of a University, where the eternal verities of life will be taught and re-taught to a stricken people, becomes supremely relevant. This is the task of an International University and it is in the fitness of things that the University should be dedicated to the sacred memory of

Sri Aurobindo. It is in the fitness of things that along with its sister University at Santiniketan, named after another great Indian, this University should also be located in India where so many peoples and so many cultures have met and found their home. The Upanishads have expressed this synthesis and harmony by the three words, *Shantam, Shivam, Adwaitam.* Sri Aurobindo has also taught us the same truth. He even goes further and says that this synthetic turn of India's spiritual vision "is not peculiar to the mystics or the literate or the thinkers, nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and the Vedanta, but permeates even the popular mind". It is here, on the sacred soil of India, where the call for synthesis first went out to the world and it is here that at the proposed University, scholars from the different parts of the world would assemble and inaugurate a new era of cultural renascence for India and the world.

I have so far dwelt on the spiritual call of Indian culture, even though the call may be going unheeded today. As Sri Aurobindo says, it is a spiritual, an inner freedom, that can alone create a perfect human order. But his freedom does not ignore, cannot ignore, the evolution of man's lower, physical, vital and mental nature. Progress to the age of the spirit must pass through the three conceptions, each regarded as a reality, the third leading to the subjective age of mankind. We cannot skip over any of the intermediate stages without peril to mankind, though such an adventure may succeed in the case of particular individuals. Body, life and mind, all these must assume significance in man's adventure of the spirit. The highest achievements may yet elude all except a few. But the disciplines they indicate are meant for the upliftment of mankind as a whole, their ascent from the ignorant nature to the spiritual existence. This great adventure is characteristically typified in the life of Sri Aurobindo. It began in an urge for the political liberation of India. It paved the path for a miracle, the great revelation that came to him in 1909 in his prison. The window that had been closed flew open and the Divine stood revealed befor him. With the same abandon with which he had struggled for India's political freedom, he began his long patient quest for the freedom of the spirit. The two Aurobindos merged with each other, the political fighter and the yogi. Even then his earlier patriotism was tinged with a spiritual penumbra. He was thus a true Indian. When we read from his books, he seems to appear out of the pages of our ancient sacred lore, the representative of all their wisdom made dynamic by an awareness of the present spiritual crisis. I am sure the proposed University will symbolise the world's urge for a new spiritual rebirth; it

will stand out as an oasis amidst the barren tracts that breed jealousies, suspicions and petty conflicts.

II *

The work that is about to be undertaken is a mighty one. No doubt, there will be support throughout the world. Let us not minimise the difficulties and complexities of the task. We propose to work this University for imparting training to men and women in accordance with the highest standards for the purpose of participating in the great task of reconstruction of humanity. Institutions of this type are bound to fail unless we can gather men and women who will not only feel on the lines that Sri Aurobindo lived, but also act upto them. This place has already within its resources such men and women who will be able to undertake this gigantic responsibility. It is our hope that men and women from all parts of the world will be attracted by the ideology for which this institution will stand.

Men and women selected for training must be carefully chosen because they must be able to absorb cent percent the ideology for which this institution will stand. We need not pay attention to the quantitative aspect of the problem, because we have many Universities where thousands of students pass out and we do not want to see any replica of such institutions.

The policy of our Government should be to encourage experiments of the type being made here so that the work may be carried on without hindrance or difficulty.

Any institution, if it is to function, must be under proper discipline and be conducted in a manner which will lead to smooth and efficient work. At the Ashram, we see abundant evidence of the great organizing ability of the Mother, who is the presiding deity over this place. Everywhere there is regularity, smoothness and efficiency. There is no hue and cry. This is a remarkable feature which, obviously, is an asset to any institution of the type we propose to develop. And with the Mother here, we have not the least doubt that this institution will grow from strength to strength and will be the pride of not only India, but of the entire civilised world.

India has a mission and a destiny to fulfil. Some voice will rise from this land to which the world has to listen. It will not be the voice of conflict or chaos but the voice of peace where self-respect and honour will be

* Extracts from the Concluding Speech

kept. That voice was discovered by Aurobindo and the people all over the world will come to tread Aurobindo's path.

Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose

I have given the proposal to establish an International University Centre at Pondicherry as a memorial to Sri Aurobindo my most anxious consideration, and give it my whole-hearted support. Sri Aurobindo was a great teacher—one of the greatest of the age in which he was born and which he adorned. It was as a teacher that Sri Aurobindo began his work in Baroda and it was to shoulder the responsibilities of a teacher that he left Baroda for Calcutta where, he thought, he would get ample opportunities to prepare his students for the struggle ahead. That struggle was not only economical and political but psychological as well.

In the words of Tennyson Sri Aurobindo could say when he became a teacher—

> "—I dipped into future, far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be."

And his sight penetrated into the future when the vision of a new world rose before his mind's eye as rose the vision of New Jerusalem before the rapt eyes of the author of the Apocalypse. He was convinced that Spirituality alone could supply the passport to the new World. This realisation had come to him when he had studied the history of the world. He found that Rome under the heels of whose cohorts the earth shook, so to say, to its centre had faded away and only reminded one of the lines of the poet:—

> "Where Empires towered that were not just:
> Lo! the shulking wild fox scratches in a little heap of dust."

He found that Greece, the mother of Western civilisation, was sleeping the sleep that knows no waking and was almost forgotten. He found that Egypt hoary with age lay buried under the sphinxes and the pyramids

of her desert. And lo and behold! India lived. She lived in her spirituality. And he said:—

"What was the secret of that gigantic intellectuality, spirituality and superhuman moral force which we see pulsating in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, in the ancient philosophy, in the supreme poetry, art, sculpture and architecture of India? What was at the basis of the incomparable public works and the engineering achievements, the opulent and exquisite industries, the great triumph of science, scholarship, jurisprudence, logic, metaphysics, the unique social structure? What supported the heroism, the self-abandonment of the Kshatriya, the Sikh and the Rajpoot, the unconquerable national vitality and endurance? What was it that stood behind the civilisation second to none in the massiveness of its outlines or the perfection of its details? Without a great and unique discipline involving a perfect education of soul and mind, a result so immense and persistent would not have been possible."

The realisation became clear with the revelation which awaited him in incarceration; and Sri Aurobindo began to teach a new Gospel which gave the world the eternal message in the shape which suited the needs of the age—the requirements of the people immersed in materialism.

He sought political freedom, because "to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom is the very height of ignorance and folly."

He placed before the people the ideal presented in the *Gita*—the "living message" of the teacher who is "the God in man who moves our whole world of action, by and for whom all our humanity exists and struggles and labours, towards whom all human life travels and progresses."

Political freedom was not an end itself, but means to an end in view. And the end in view was the completion of what Sri Aurobindo has called the human cycle.

The system of education which is prevailing now is not conducive to the end in view. For though we talk of diffusing the fertilizing waters of intellectual knowledge from their great and copious fountain-heads at the Universities by a thousand irrigating channels, we overlook the significant fact that mere scholarship and learning and the knowledge of books do not by any means arrest and dissolve all the travelling acids of the human system. And as Sri Aurobindo has said—we are only beginning to undertsand the new aim of education—"to help the child to develop his intellectual,

aesthetic, emotional, moral, spiritual being and his communal life and impulses out of his own temperament and capacities,"—a very different object from the prevailing education which is "simply to pack so much stereotyped knowledge into his resisting brain and impose a stereotyped rule of conduct on his struggling and dominated impulses."

To achieve the end in view a new education has to be imparted. That education will be based primarily on Sri Aurobindo's teaching. The proposed University, therefore, will give not merely instruction and education but a way of life to lead the students on to a greater, ampler and divine existence.

Far from ignoring—Sri Aurobindo recognised and accorded full importance to the idiosyncrasies of individuals and nations. In his article on the Doctrine of Passive Resistance he wrote:—

"Hinduism recognises human nature.....It sets one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal for all is to bring about *Varnasankara*, the confusion of duties, and destroy society and race."

In his Ideal of the Karmayogin he wrote:—

"In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing yet constant soul and the brittle changeable body. The spirit we cannot change, we can only obscure or lose; the soul must not be rashly meddled with, must neither be tortured into a shape alien to it, nor obstructed in its free expansion; and the body must be used as a means not over-cherished as a thing valuable for its own sake."

The idiosyncrasies of the students, therefore, must be studied and every one of them given full scope to develop towards the ideal along the path it finds ready and on the line of least resistance.

A University which will proceed on these lines will prove a boon to those who will be its alumni. They will not only learn to earn and serve society but, what is even more important, will help to create a new society for the new world of Sri Aurobindo's dream.

Every department of knowledge—theoretical and practical will be taught the institution to students who may come from any part of the globe irrespective of nationality and religion. It will be a bold experiment but worthy of the man who conceived the idea of establishing an international university centre which will include within its ample sweep all departments of knowledge and students of every nationality.

There may be objections, hesitations, difficulties postulated. But all

must be swept by the fervour of sincerity and the realisation of the nobility of the work. There will be criticism. It should be welcomed. For, criticism is something you can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing and being nothing.

In 1897 Swami Vivekananda, of whom Sri Aurobindo wrote that we perceive his "influence still working gigantically," wrote:—

"We Hindus, have now been placed under God's providence, in a very critical and responsible position. The nations of the West are coming to us for spiritual help. A great moral obligation rests on the sons of India to fully equip themselves for the work of enlightening the world on the problems of human existence."

For years Sri Aurobindo had been doing that work. Fully equipped for the work he gave the seekers after truth the secret of Life Divine, for as he said:—

"It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and saving light."

The equipment necessary for the teacher who will give the world spiritual life and saving light will be supplied by the University Centre which is to be established at Pondicherry. On its success will depend continuance of that stream of Truth which is to resuscitate the world desponding, distressed and drooping—to quicken the atrophied veins of the East and chasten the materialism of the West with the spirituality of the East so that a new world may come out and the struggles of humanity may become the cruel sweet pangs of parturition.

I have exceeded the alloted span of human life, the sands in the glass are fast running out.

> "I feel like one who treads alone
> Some banquet hall deserted,
> Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead
> And all but he departed."

It may not be left to me to see the accomplishment of the work which is being undertaken. But I am confident that it will "orb into the perfect star" which we do not and cannot see today. I wish the undertaking the success it richly deserves.

Before I conclude I cannot help referring to an objection to the University

Centre proposal which has been recently made. I would not have taken any notice of it if it had not emanated from one who had been one of Sri Aurobindo's trusted lieutenants in his campaign for political freedom. Sri Barindra Ghose has opposed having an international university at Pondicherry for two reasons:—

(1) He thinks that the memorial should take the form of an intensive Yogic Centre—"carried on under the guidance of great Indian Yogis".

(2) He objects to Pondicherry being the seat of that centre till it ceases to be a French pocket in the Indian Union, as, otherwise, it may "easily degenerate into a means of further foreign grip on India and Asia."

The first suggestion would take us back to the Mediaeval times—if not into the dim recesses of a more distant past. This would be contrary to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo who stood for progress.

The second would only mean the postponement of the work for an indefinite period. One fails to understand how the proposed University may degenerate into a means of further foreign grip on India and Asia though the author of the 'Wounded Deer' had supported the retention of British supremacy in India. On the other hand the University may help to remove the grip of one people on another through the teaching of Sri Aurobindo.

The *Ashram* cannot be removed from Pondicherry redolent of the aroma of Sri Aurobindo's teaching and the last resting place of his physical remains. The University ideal has not been vamped up in a hurry but had been the ideal of Sri Aurobindo himself, as we have been given to understand. And we are here today to give shape to that ideal of which we have the clay model.

Let us hope that the University will only help to spread Sri Aurobindo's teachings so that the future may be flushed with the radiance of a new dawn beckoning us into a greater light than has ever yet shone on mankind.

May the Divine Mother whose creed stands today above the contending creeds of India, at whose temple Sri Aurobindo acted as a worshipper and a priest bless the organisation. May he speak to the world, trumpet tongued from the silence of his *samadhi*—

"When all the temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy worshipper outside?"

BANDE MATARAM.

PROF. SOMNATH MAITRA

I consider it a singular privilege to be allowed to address this distinguished gathering where disciples and admirers of Sri Aurobindo have assembled to discuss, under the guidance of the Mother, ways and means of founding an international university in Pondicherry to serve as a fitting memorial to our Master.

It is difficult for me, after the profoundly inspiring message of the Mother and the brilliant address of the President who is widely known as one of the foremost living authorities on matters educational in India, and after the thoughtful papers read by the speakers before me, to say anything of value about the details of the project for an international university. I shall, therefore, content myself with putting before you my idea of the distinctive character which a university established in Pondicherry, under the auspices of the Mother, is likely to develop.

There are universities galore in most countries of what we call the civilised world, and we have quite a few in India also. They have more or less the same objective everywhere: the imparting of instruction and the encouragement of research in the various branches of human knowledge, with an increasing emphasis on the study of Science and Technology. These institutions—some great, some small—are all attempting, according to their own lights, to equip their alumni with knowledge of the world and of themselves, knowledge that will give them control over the forces of nature and help them to remove the ills of humanity—ignorance and disease and poverty—and make them better and happier men and women.

Are we then, it may be asked, endeavouring to add one more to the number of such useful—and one may say, more or less international—centres of learning and culture? If the answer were to be in the affirmative, if we were to say, "Yes, we desire to have another seat of learning in this part of the land as each such institution is an asset to the country," there would be nothing to be ashamed of in such a reply. But that would not be the whole truth about the matter.

The establishment of a University in Pondicherry sponsored by the Mother, besides being a welcome addition to the existing seats of learning has a special significance. The new university will be informed by the spirit of our great Master, the spirit of the Life Divine. It will not only arrange for the study and propagation of his teachings and take steps to

bring humanity nearer to the realisation of his supreme ideal of the perfectly integrated life, but it will also be invisibly fashioned and moulded at every turn by a sense of his deathless Presence. And for this no better site could be chosen than the neighbourhood of the Ashram where the Master spent his best years labouring in silence to change man's nature that he may be reborn in the Spirit, providing by the very example of his life a refuge to the spirit of man in a dark and distracted world and holding out, to a blundering and suffering humanity, the hope of the ultimate glory and bliss to which it is destined.

A university here, therefore, under the Mother's control and guidance will be something more than a mere centre for study and research in a wide variety of subjects, or a congenial meeting-ground for men and women of different races and cultures. The Mother's Shakti working behind the contemplated organisation will make all the difference in the world. Those who have any knowledge of her ways and of her power, those who have watched the marvellous working out of her will in the multifarious activities of the Ashram, will understand that whatever work she inspires becomes at once a service for the Divine, whose performance is regarded not as an irksome duty but as a joyful privilege. It is only natural to expect, therefore, that in any new undertaking launched by her, there will be this consciousness of a Divine purpose and goal directing all activity. To the architects and masons of the great edifice to be built she will give strength and courage and skill, and their myriad separate endeavours will be held together in a supreme unity of inspiration.

It is said that Divine Grace can put words of fire into the mouths of the dumb, and enable the halt and the maimed to scale and cross the proudest mountains. The Mother's Grace will transmute the common work of day-to-day into something rich and beautiful and the common worker into a master craftsman. For it is perfectly true to say of her, in the words of one of Rabindranath Tagore's famous songs:

Jara taba shakti labhila nija antara-majhey
Barjila bhaya, arjila joy, sarthak hala kaje

Those who receive your power in their hearts fulfil themselves in work, casting out fear and marching on to Victory.

PROF. TAN YUN-SHAN

(*Director of the Cheena Bhavana of Visvabharati, Santiniketan,*)

I can hardly express in words the joy I have been feeling since my arrival here after twelve years. This joy deepens with the hours of my stay here and as I stand before you now. In the midst of this joy there is a poignancy because our Master is physically not here, though his presence is there pervading the whole Ashram and I began to feel it as soon as I arrived.

Universities in ancient India were famous all over the world for their catholic outlook and particularly for the knowledge of the highest kind they imparted to all, irrespective of caste, creed or race. They were also alive to the need for disseminating the fruits of India's manysided cultural endeavours through these selfless ambassadors whom they sent to various parts of the world. It is due to the work of these devoted sons of Mother India that the priceless gems of her eternal wisdom shine even to this day in the world's treasures of knowledge as the foundation of the future empire of the spirit.

A rediscovery of the truth of India's past as also the truth of all the ancient countries and a correct appraisement of the values of modern culture in the light of the revelatory vision with which we have been blessed by the Maha-Yogi-Sri Aurobindo, are of vital importance to the building up of the new world of God in which alone lies the hope of a happier future of mankind.

The Master has therefore given us the sublime idea of an International University, the culture-centre where, as in those of old, men and women from the whole world would receive training in the various arts and sciences whose essential verities will be reinterpreted as dynamic factors in the cultural evolution of man preparing him for his divine destiny.

Many of the well-known universities in the world have developed out of the medieval monasteries. In ancient India also her seats of learning traced their origin to the ashramas, hermitages and monasteries. We recall today a hoary tradition as we think of the future of this World-University growing out of this Ashram at Pondicherry whose aim is pursuit of knowledge for the attainment of a perfect life in which lies its unique character.

I am exceedingly happy to be able to associate myself and my country with this great venture whose success is certain because it is the Mother

who is planning and guiding it, the Mother who has come to give shape to the Master's vision.

Dr. Kalidas Nag *

I consider it a privilege to be invited to participate in the inauguration of the Sri Aurobindo University and to address the assembly after Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose, who had the honour of collaborating with Sri Aurobindo in the epoch-making journal *Bande Mataram*. The fiery lines penned by Sri Aurobindo in that journal used to be quoted on the cover of the exercise-books and those lines used to inflame the soul of mere school boys like us. 1905-1910 was a quinquennium which opened with the expulsion of Sri Aurobindo as Principal of our first National Council of Education, and with the inauguration of the University of Freedom, where thousands of youths flocked in the highways, parks and bye-lanes of Calcutta, to get initiated into the cult of Swadeshi and total sacrifice for our country's liberation. Jails and gallows lost their terror and youths sacrificed their lives freely and cheerfully with the Bhagavad Gita and the words of Sri Aurobindo on their lips.

I remember today that Sri Aurobindo was born to celebrate in Asia, as it were, the centenary of the Rights of Man of the French Revolution; and naturally, the first phase of his public career was devoted to the Political liberation of Man in Asia. After the Alipore Bomb case and his retirement to Pondicherry we witness the second phase in the evolution when Sri Aurobindo laid the foundations of our intellectual liberation through his creative and synthetic writings of the *Arya* epoch and the First World War. A synoptic vision of World literature and of future Poetry emerged from the profound utterances in prose and poetry by Sri Aurobindo the World poet, expressing himself in a world language which he enriched more than any writer of his age. Then, when Rabindranath—who greeted him with a magnificent poem in 1908—came to see him in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo was already retiring completely within himself to work out the third and the final phase: the spiritual liberation of Mankind through "inte-

* Summary of the Speech

gral yoga"—the half-forgotten but eternal heritage of Mother India to humanity. Thus, Sri Aurobindo is the University pointing to a radically new conception of the term. It should not be a mere copy of any of the universities of India or abroad. Sri Aurobindo University should aspire to provide the training ground for youths who would build up a new personality in a new universe.

The syllabus as well as the system of studies in this university should attempt a synthesis of the East and the West; for, Mother—came to collaborate with Rishi Aurobindo of the Orient. The magnificent sea-front of the Pondicherry Ashram reminds me of the fact that our Indian Ocean is the receptacle of the Atlantic and Pacific cultures, and into that confluence have flowed in the spiritual rivers of diverse countries and continents. It is a striking coincidence that in the very year 1893 when Sri Aurobindo was returning after 14 years to Mother India from Europe, Swami Vivekananda was going by the eastern route to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was going by the western route to South Africa to tackle, as 'Coolie Barrister', the ominous race problem of modern history. We must remember these fundamental facts while framing the basic regulations of the Sri Aurobindo University, and if we prove ourselves worthy of the great tradition of culture and spirituality that was Sri Aurobindo, we need not worry about the human or material aids and equipments. Let us work in that faith, and Sri Aurobindo will bless us in our endeavour to vindicate the Life Divine in this Atomic age threatening to annihilate Life and perpetrate the greatest sacrilege in history.

Sri Surendra Mohan Ghose (M. P.)

I am very grateful to you all for giving me this opportunity to associate myself with the main resolution of this noble and sublime conference. I also consider this opportunity to be a very great privilege in my life.

Friends, let me tell you frankly at the very outset that after hearing the learned speeches of eminent scholars those who are expecting to hear another speech from me will be very much disappointed.

At the very early age of fifteen I accepted Sri Aurobindo as my leader and have been all through my life a humble worker with his light as my

constant guide and as such I have with all humility tried to execute his ideas avoiding speeches as far as possible.

Of all Indian leaders Sri Aurobindo was the first to rightly proclaim to the world that complete independence outside British control was the aim of the people of India in their hard struggle for liberation. We bow down our heads with great reverence at his feet, taking a solemn vow with all seriousness pledging every thing to translate into action the great ideals preached by him as a great Yogi. Those who have ears to hear will certainly hear, and are as a matter of fact hearing, the sacred voice of Sri Aurobindo out of silence. The voice of Sri Aurobindo is the true Voice of India with her hoary civilisation and culture and has universal application.

The first point in the main resolution is the establishment of an International University at Pondicherry, as was originally conceived by Sri Aurobindo himself, the entire control of which, in all its aspects, shall remain in the divine hands of the Mother. In this connection let me state that the use of the word "University" to express the ideas of Sri Aurobindo is liable or likely to create some confusion in the minds of some people.

We have to use the word 'University' because we have not got at present a better and more comprehensive word to convery correctly the concept of Sri Aurobindo. But I am sure in due course of time with the development of this University either the word 'University' will have fuller meaning or we shall have to coin some new word to fit in with the activities of Pondicherry Ashram under the benign control and guidance of the Mother.

In the Memorandum it has been rightly pointed out that Sri Aurobindo teaches us that "there are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation".

One of our previous distinguished speakers, Dr. Kalidas Nag repeatedly and very rightly too emphasised the fact that Sri Aurobindo himself was the "University" and that University was already there at Pondicherry from the date when he came there and it has been functioning there vigorously till now and that our object is not to establish a new University there but we are to simply accept the University which already exists there i.e. Sri Aurobindo.

Friends, I submit that truly speaking the University is the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. They are not two different personalities. We should not make the mistake in thinking that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are two different personalities. Both represent two aspects of one and the same Personality. I would very much like to say that we should not think that Sri Aurobindo is the University but we should firmly accept and proclaim that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is the University.

Another point and I have finished. The idea of having an International University at Pondicherry must not be confused with the idea of the present day Universities all over the world, because we are to always remember that the fundamental and essential conception of Sri Aurobindo is to build up a society of immortals on this mortal earth—that makes all the difference. We must not forget what Sri Aurobindo has said: the supramental descent is an absolute certainty.

Mr. President and Friends, I whole-heartedly support the resolution in its entirety which, as it has been pointed out, is in reality one integral proposal although apparently divided into three—the different portions of the resolution are self-explanatory and do not require much elucidation.

With these few words I bow down my head most reverentially to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and pray with all humility for their Blessings for the success of our efforts.

Bande Mataram

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

24th April, 1951

I just rise to call upon our friends and comrades to help us in our endeavour in whatever way each can and is willing—in deed, in thought or even in word. Our ideal is, as you know, the formation of a University Centre, an international university, as it has been called, which in fact is nothing less than the founding of a new mankind upon earth—with a new life and a new consciousness. The promise has been given that the thing can be done and will be done. And She is in our midst who will make good the promise.

25th April, 1951

Friends and comrades, we are now at the end of our deliberations—a happy and successful end, you will agree, which, however, is only the beginning of a still happier and greater end. It remains for me to thank you all for the sympathy and goodwill you have shown and the promise of help and cooperation meant thereby. I have to thank especially our President, Srijut Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, who has been so extremely affable and helpful to us.

I thank again all of you who have come from far and near, and we hope to see many of you in future coming here and spending a few days now and then in our midst.

MINUTES
of
Proceedings of
The Sri Aurobindo Memorial Convention
held in Pondicherry at the Tennis Ground of Sri Aurobindo Ashram,
on April 24 & 25, 1951

24th April, 1951

The proceedings commenced at 4.15 P.M. after Tea.

Sri K.C.Dutt proposed Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee to the chair and Sri S. N. Jauhar seconded the proposal. Dr. Mukherjee then occupied the chair.

The Mother inaugurated the Convention with a brief Message in which she announced that Sri Aurobindo considered the formation of an International University Centre here as one of the best means of propagating his Ideal of a new supramental race.

This was followed by the singing of *Bande Mataram* and other songs by Sri Dilip Kumar Roy and party.

Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee then delivered his presidential address. He emphasised the need, at the present juncture, of such a university centre which would be not only the fittest Memorial to Sri Aurobindo but would,

under the guidance and inspiration of the Mother, develop into a rejuvenating Force for the entire human civilisation.

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta, following, made an appeal to all to contribute to the establishment and success of the projected Centre, each in the way he best could.

Messages received from all over India and abroad, wishing success to to the Function and godspeed to the proposal were read out.

Mr. Soli Albless then spoke on the character and significance of the proposed International University and presented an outline of the Blueprints for the immediate beginnings.

Professors Somnath Maitra and Tan Yun Shan, Mr. Pollack and Sri Keshavdev Poddar made brief speeches welcoming the formation of the University Centre on the lines envisaged by Sri Aurobindo.

After a closing song by Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the President adjourned the session for the day, at 6 P.M., to meet again the next day at 9 A.M.

25th April, 1951

When the Convention reassembled at 9 A.M., the President Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee moved Resolutions, three in number (vide enclosure 1), for the consideration of those assembled.

Dr. Bernard Phillips, Justice Bhagavati, Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Justice B. N. Rai, Sri Chapalakanta Bhattacharya, Sri Surendra Mohan Ghose and Dr. R. Vaidyanathaswamy spoke supporting the Resolutions and pledging their support to the proposals contained therein.

The President then put the Resolutions to vote and they were, all three of them, passed unanimously, all raising their hands for *aye* and none for *no*. Dr. Mukherjee proceded to make a few concluding remarks in the course of which he paid feeling tributes to the personality of the presiding genius of the Mother around whom, he confidently predicted, an eventual blossoming of a Centre which will be a credit not only to India but to the whole of civilised mankind and conveyed to her the gratitude of all those present and all those who could not be present but desired to associate themselves with the Great Cause in hand for what she has done and was going to do in this regard.

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta, Secretary of the Ashram, spoke a few words thanking all for the warm interest and goodwill they had shown in as-

sembling here for the deliberations of the Convention and specially thanked the President Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee for all that he did in guiidng the proceedings to a successful close.

After a formal announcement by the President that the proceedings of the Convention were now terminated, the delegates and visitors dispersed with the prophetic utterance of a distinguished speaker, made earlier in the day, still ringing in their ears:

> "One day it will be said that a Daughter of the West
> fulfilled the Promise given by a Son of the East."

25-4-1951.
PONDICHERRY

Sd. S. P. MOOKERJEE
President

RESOLUTIONS

I

This Convention resolves that with the purpose of realising one of the most cherished ideals of Sri Aurobindo and of giving concrete shape to what he regarded as one of the best means of preparing humanity to receive the Supramental Light, an International University on the lines approved by the Mother, and under her guidance and control, be established in Pondicherry as a fitting memorial to the Master.

This Convention notes with satisfaction that encouraging response has already been received from various quarters within and outside the country. This Convention appeals with confidence to all people in and outside India to contribute liberally to the fund which has already been started by the Mother for the purpose and to send their contributions directly to the Mother at Pondicherry.

This Convention resolves that a suitable appeal for support be issued to be signed by representative men and women in India and abroad and the President be authorised to take the necessary steps on this behalf.

II

This Convention welcomes the move to establish as Memorials to Sri Aurobindo, Centres at Calcutta and Baroda—places long associated with significant and sacred chapters of Sri Aurobindo's life and activities—for the study and propagation of his teachings. This Convention expresses the hope that similar institutions will be opened at different centres of Culture in India and abroad.

The initiative for such Memorials should come from the localities in which these are intended to be established. It is desirable that such institutions should work in close association with the central organisation at Pondicherry specially to maintain co-ordination and a uniform standard in work.

III

This Convention requests the Mother to nominate a committee whose purpose would be to be in touch with the Mother and assist in the collection of Funds and materials.

EXTRACTS FROM MESSAGES

Senor Salvador De Madariaga, Professor of Spanish studies at Oxford:

I send you my best wishes. The analytical age is coming to its close. It fulfilled its purpose. But now something else is needed. The age of synthesis is about to begin. And how could it begin if no high centre of perspective were provided for all the parts to fall in into harmony?

The American Academy of Asian Studies, San Francisco:

Glorious success assured to your venture towards integral transformation. The cooperation of all spiritual forces throughout the world certain.

Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg, Director of Indian and Tibetian Studies, The American Academy of Asian Studies:

Glory to the International University Centre, which is certain to become

the best school in the world. The Master will live in it, just as he has been the life-giving flame of our new school here.

M. BRODETHKY, President Hebrew University, Jerusalem:

Our wishes (for) successful establishment International University which we hope will contribute the increase of knowledge and better understanding among nations.

M. BERGMAN, Hebrew University:

May this be milestone on way fulfilment Ideal unity Mankind.

DR. R. K. YAJNIK, Director of Education, Saurashtra:

This movement will gather momentum as it deals with the progress of human civilisation and perfection of man as man from within and without. Sri Aurobindo's spoken and written words and the fountain-source of his magnetic personality will be an important bearing on the evolution of this International University. On my side I can assure you of my whole-hearted support in this great mission.

S. G. AMIN, Kenya:

We find great reverence in wide unexpected circles and enthusiam for international university.

DR. P. S. NAIDU, University of Allahabad:

I wish it were possible for me to go to the sacred Ashram and participate in the noble Function.

I am deeply moved by the sentiments which have prompted the calling of the Convention. You are aiming at bringing together men and women whose thought and action are 'based on a knowledge higher than the intellect, and on capacities deriving their support from oneness with the Divine.' We do need, and need most urgently, a dynamic Centre for spreading the consciousness of our oneness with the Divine. The 'Sickle and Hammer' cult is furiously spreading the doctrine of our oneness with the animal. And it is succeeding as it is easy to rouse up the animal in man. This doctrine has to be fought on all fronts. And the hollowness and tendentious pomposity of dialectical materialism has to be ruthlessly exposed. The University you are contemplating will, since it will be inspired by Sri Aurobindo's ideals, give the death-blow to Communism and all that it stands for.

DR. K. C. VARADACHARI, Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Sri Venkateshwara College, Tirupati:

I deem it a great honour and call to service to participate in the important Convention at Pondicherry the results of which may be considered to be most important and epoch-making in the history of not only India but the world. The founding of an International University on the lines envisaged by Sri Aurobindo who is more and more clearly being recognised as the most magnificent thinker of the present Age and the Prophet of the future may rightly be the turning point of human history.

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